

World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals

Thursday, 12 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Puerto Rico

Manager Yadier Molina

Martín Maldonado

Nolan Arenado

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Martin, first and foremost, any comments in regards to Saturday's game against Italy, a team that has been playing good ball? They're on the hot streak. They have a good rhythm. What could you tell them about that team? What have you seen and what should be Puerto Rico's focus?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: We're getting ready. We know they've been playing good ball because the way they've been playing the games. So we do have a lot of knowledge on what they bring to the table, what they've done.

They have good players in the Major Leagues. So our focus will be to attack the zone, just like we did in Puerto Rico, make it tough on the opponent. And that's what unifies us and that's the way we play as a team.

NOLAN ARENADO: We play really good ball. We play with heart. And they've got some great players. They play with a lot of energy. And we'll have to just continue to play our game, play with a lot of energy and go out there and play good clean baseball like we have been.

We've been playing really good baseball and playing really good defense, pitching. And hopefully we can get the bats going a little bit more, myself, included. But overall, it will be a tough game but we'll be well prepared.

Q. The last game, you got three hits. People were claiming for you to get a hit, you got 3. Tell me about the process of getting in rhythm and how this park is good for hitting?

NOLAN ARENADO: It felt good to come through and have some good at-bats. Obviously I wish we would have won. But to hit the ball hard, have good at-bats, see the ball well



and make my plays, that's why I'm here is to do those little things.

And obviously playing in this ballpark, it will be nice. It's a big league ballpark. So it will be a lot of fun. The goal is to just continue to have good at-bats, hit the ball hard and make my plays. But I'm happy to do it here.

Q. Your former teammate, Mike DeRosa, spoke about Italy. An underrated opponent, but not anymore. What are your thoughts in regards to the Italian team? What makes them so dangerous.

YADIER MOLINA: Italy is obviously here not by coincidence. They have great chemistry, great planning. I know their coaching staff, much respect towards them for what they're doing. They're another team to us obviously because we're focused on what we can do on the field.

We know we cannot feel overconfident and we cannot underestimate anyone. We respect them, but we also have talent and we have the energy and the effort to go after it.

Q. In regards to the stadium, you played 20 times here. Do you have any positive or negative memories here or is it like any other park?

YADIER MOLINA: Many good memories from '04. I played here as well in a playoff series. It's a really good atmosphere. A lot of noise here when this place is full.

So it brings back to me really good memories. So I'm really happy to be here in this Puerto Rican uniform. We'll be ready on Saturday.

Q. (Indiscernible) in Houston and managing in the Major Leagues. Do you think the success that you're both having in this World Baseball Classic can show teams and inspire teams to give you that opportunity some day?

YADIER MOLINA: Hopefully they take a look and see how ready we are and the way we run things here. Albert is a baseball man. I wish him the best. Obviously he's doing a great things over there in Miami with the Dominican team.



And hopefully they look at us and give us a shot at some point.

Q. Martín, talk about the stadium. They have the Crawford boxes here and the bullpen. And some measurements are a little shorter. I was able to have time and talk to the players about what do you think about the way the dimensions of the field is?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: We were walking the field, we were checking. We asked Cintron that was here for a while. And Nolan and Erik have played here before. So we have a team that's ready especially with the experience that we have to know how to -- even everyone is, like, pitching in what they know about this stadium. We're trying to get to figure it out little by little.

Q. Can you tell me if you're going to train tonight? There's a ceiling. Would that help with the timing, with resting, all that?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, well, we're anxious to play already, to go out there and get to know the field as well and the ambiance and the atmosphere. It's very different in regards to Bithorn. But we're ready.

All these resting days are good for our pitching, training. We have a lot of pitchers throwing a whole bunch today. They're going to bring their batters as well. But we're very happy in regards to knowing that we can prepare the best way possible and we would take these days seriously to train and go over fundamentals and be ready for Saturday.

Q. Just to simply confirm, Saturday, is everyone available?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, as of now.

Q. Even the cat?

YADIER MOLINA: Yeah.

Q. Martín, your picture is up right there on the wall. You have had great moments here with this franchise that's here in this stadium. What does that mean for you to come back to this stadium and the closing end of your career?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: Many, many memories, many emotions, in this stadium I played, which I had a whole bunch of games here. Also represent Puerto Rico in this stadium, be able to port my grain of salt and try to move forward in this tournament. Yeah, we have a bunch of memories playing here. My sister and my kids have way more memories because they love the food here.

But in regards to myself, I'm really happy to be here, be back in this stadium. This is where I spent most of my career, and it's great to be back.

Q. Nolan, in the prior tournament, there were certain issues with certain guys being here. Can you comment on how you've gelled together, come together to play such great baseball regardless of all that noise?

NOLAN ARENADO: Yeah, I think the first thing, it starts with Yadi. There's no excuses being made. The focus is to continue to focus on winning and going out there and that's what this team has always done. If you've been in the past watching them and even now been a part of it. The focus is on winning. They don't let things distract them in the clubhouse. That's something that I've always admired. But I think we wish those guys were here. They are here with us. They're always in our group text, cheering us on, FaceTiming, always pulling for us. They're here but maybe not physically.

But I think for the most part, this group, their head is down and the focus has just been unbelievable and it shows in the way we're playing the game.

Q. We've counted like ten family members. You're here as a captain, what do you expect to happen on Saturday at 2:00 p.m.?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: My mom came on a flight this morning. She said there were so many Puerto Rican fans than anything else. We know that our fans are going to be here. They're going to take a straight flight from Puerto Rico, and also know that a lot of Puerto Ricans reside here.

Have you seen the previous Classics? Puerto Rico has taken a bunch of fans wherever they go. I remember in 2017, there's a bunch of Puerto Ricans in Mexico, so we know that either they're either being here or in Puerto Rico, they're still going to show up, and that we may feel that support and love.

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