

World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals

Friday, 13 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Puerto Rico

General Manager Carlos Beltrán

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. What differences do you see in this Italian squad throughout the tournament, given that Puerto Rico has had success in the WBC. Italy stepped up to the challenge.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Oh, for sure. Italy has a lot of talent on their squad. We know most of them play in the Major Leagues. Also, Cervelli, their coach, he's a great coach and even better human being.

We can see that they have built a great culture throughout the tournament. They seem to have a great connection, great chemistry. And they're going through a good time right now.

But we also know that every team in this tournament is tough, and we cannot underestimate anyone, in this case, Italy. And they shouldn't underestimate us either.

So we know that tomorrow's game is going to be very important. We also know that our team is very young. And I believe that the experience we had in Puerto Rico recently was good and was a positive sign because now we're carrying that momentum moving forward.

Q. How can you describe the guys' mentality for tomorrow's game, given that the last couple of days they share a power ranking and it showed that Puerto Rico is at the bottom, they're like one of the underdogs in the tournament? So with that said, what's your mentality like when you go on the field, because honestly we haven't seen that. It has not been that way in your previous games. So how can you approach the situation?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: We always come out ready. We're actually having a good time in this tournament. There's a great dynamic between the veterans and the youngsters. I see the vets sharing their knowledge with the youngsters,



and the youngsters are also good receptors. They listen to what they're being told.

I also see a great humility from the youngsters to the vets, and that's been really good to see. I remember when I was building this roster, I wanted to have a few vets that could come and be able to manage the team from inside of the locker room and share with the youngsters what it is to be in a tournament like this, and what it is to be a great player, what a great career.

And I see that now, but I see it obviously from a different place as a manager. And I keep telling the youngsters to try to soak in everything they can and to not be shy to ask questions to the vets. It's always good to ask questions.

And, so, yes, now we're ready to face Italy on Saturday, tomorrow.

Q. Carlos, what would you like say to the people in Puerto Rico? We know there are people out there that couldn't make it to the game, but they're going to be watching the game from their homes, barbecuing, having their food ready, having a bunch of family over to watch you guys succeed in this tournament.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Yes, I would like to give a shout-out to all my people in Puerto Rico, all our fans in Puerto Rico, and to let them know that we're going to try our best. We're going to go out there on the field and play our hearts out, play our game, play our baseball, have fun, but also playing clean and wanting to come out with a victory.

That's what we all want, and we don't want to go home early. We want to stay in the tournament to the very end. So, yes, I'd like to dedicate this message to the Puerto Rican fans.

Q. Carlos, I know you've been getting really good news lately since the year started. Now being in the Hall of Fame, having an opportunity to coach in the Major Leagues, what would you like to say about that?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Well, first of all, I'm blessed with all the good news that is happening around me. I'm very thankful for me and my family and the fans who have been



following my career for so long.

It's a huge blessing to be able to have the opportunity to continue fighting for our Latin American players in the world of baseball. And by the grace of God I've had really good relationships with a lot of people in the baseball community that has all kinds of opportunities.

So I just keep pushing forward to be able to give my guys an opportunity, and now I'm being recognized on such a platform. It's a huge deal for me. I've always liked to have the opportunity to promote baseball, promote opportunities. So I'm really happy and proud of that.

Q. I would love to ask you about the young outfielders you've added to this group this year -- Cortes, Torres and Lugo. What have been your observations of all three of them as they've played in this tournament?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: To me is they're hungry. They want to prove themselves. That's beautiful. I mean, an opportunity came to them to play. Some of them have been playing, coming from the bench. Some have had the opportunity to start games.

I do believe that playing in the World Baseball Classic and having the opportunity to play meaningful games so early is an incredible feeling.

The fact that we played in Puerto Rico, we were able to bring so much joy to our island. The guys did a great job, Yadi Molina and the coaching staff, connecting the veteran guys with the younger guys, and seeing the younger guys so receptive on the information from guys like Edgar Martínez, Juan González, Sandy Alomar and Yadi Molina.

It's a beautiful mix that we have. And we're proud of the job that we have done. So I'm looking forward to tomorrow's game. It's going to be a great game.

Italy has played incredible baseball. They have great talent and great manager in Cervelli, a guy who believes in creating a culture, a connection. You get to see those guys having fun. Every time they do something positive in the dugout, celebrating.

That's what this event is all about. It's about representing your culture and also trying to do the best job possible.

Q. Are you keeping a journal or a notebook with you during this journey to write down some notes that you might include in your Hall of Fame speech this summer? Or have any of your friends been giving you advice, oh, Carlos, maybe you should say this. I'm wondering how the inspiration is coming along for

your speech.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: It's going to be hard to resume 20-year career in a speech. I will try to do the best I can, right, to thank people that have been very meaningful to my career, also my parents and my wife who has been with me in the ups and downs of baseball, my kids.

It's about trying to collect all the information possible and resume that into, I don't know, 15 minutes. It's kind of hard. But I will do the best I can to hopefully accomplish that.

Q. I want to ask you, because you've been around on the field but also behind the scenes with front offices, what do you think the WBC does for guys like Benji Gil, guys like Yadier Molina, Cervelli, Omar Lopez to be able to show baseball owners that Latinos can manage? How big an opportunity do you think it is for these guys to manage, Albert Pujols, managing in the majors one day?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: It's a great platform. The fact that the WBC created a platform for guys like you mentioned to show their skills on how to manage a baseball game, there's no doubt that this event will open doors and have opened doors in previous years.

And I also feel that when you look at the Big Leagues and the representation that we have on the Latin side as managers in the Big Leagues, we have guys that have proven a lot and their inspiration to also generations, like Yadier Molina, like you mentioned, or Albert Pujols, guys that played the game at a very high level, very knowledgeable about the game of baseball.

I mean, there's no doubt that for years to come, you will see more Latin representation in those seats.

Q. You built a culture, a moment such as this full of Puerto Ricans, given the difficulties you faced. Then we see your people in Puerto Rico, your fans enjoying the game, enjoying the way you guys play. What inspired that to happen? And who is going to be pitching tomorrow night?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: First of all, just like you mentioned before, I think playing on Puerto Rican soil gives us the opportunity to get comfortable early in the tournament. Playing at home, playing in our ballpark, feels so comfortable. Created a really good, positive vibe, very beautiful moments, even in the highs and lows.

But at the end of the day we created this piece which allowed new opportunities for the youngsters to be able to



play almost every game, even for our shortstops, and it's nice being a youngster playing with vets, playing around them, Golden Gloves.

All those moments that the vets have with the youngsters were beautiful.

Coming to this next match tomorrow, we have Lugo pitching for tomorrow's game. He's our veteran. We're happy with the way he's been playing, representing Puerto Rico. We know we're going to face an Italian squad that has been playing great baseball here in Houston.

They also look unified and they're enjoying their game. They have something positive going. They have coaches with great experience. So it's going to be a very interesting game, very strategic as well.

Q. So this Puerto Rican team, would you compare it to the one in 2013? Would you compare, from a heart perspective, the effort that they put in on the field, would it be the same as the one from 2013?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Well, a few people have asked me that same question. Hear me out, when we have an opportunity to represent our island, which is not often, we do it with a lot of pride knowing that we have a huge opportunity. We go out there with our hearts. People might see that these players come for the love for the game and to represent their country. Not for money, they come for the culture and represent all those things. Thanks to God since we've been playing in the WBC, we have put our country up high. And those things have huge value to our lives and our careers.

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