

World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals

Friday, 13 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Italy

Sam Aldegheri

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. I'm sure you've heard from a lot of friends back in Italy during the course of this run. What are some things, any funny anecdotes of what people are saying or what you're hearing about how your team's performance is being perceived over there?

SAM ALDEGHERI: Oh, people are going crazy, man. They're sending a bunch of messages and calls right after the game. It's going to be, like, usually it's 4:00 or 5:00 a.m. back home. And people, during the week they're up watching games. They told me that we're all over the newspapers, everything. It's pretty cool. I've never seen that happen before. So it's special.

Q. And the timing of Saturday's afternoon game works out a little better, right?

SAM ALDEGHERI: It's perfect. It's going to be like 8:00 p.m. in Italy. I bet everyone is going to watch the game.

Q. What is it like now that you guys have achieved some things that maybe some people didn't forecast for you? Is it a different kind of feeling now going into the quarterfinals?

SAM ALDEGHERI: I don't think so. I mean, we are just playing. We're just trying to play our best baseball. What we did until now, it's been great.

So I don't think we need to change anything, just stay on the same plan, go out, have fun, try to win. And, I mean, everything that we did, it's working. So I don't have any reason to see why we have to change stuff.

Q. I would like to ask about Matea (phonetic) and your brother and a bit more about his journey in baseball. What have you learned from him and what are the things that Matea is doing to help grow the organization?



SAM ALDEGHERI: He's been great with me on the mentality side. He taught me everything. In the last couple of years, I was feeling a lot of pressure on myself. So he was the one that told me, like, he gave me a couple of exercises to do to calm down, how to think on the mound, to feel less pressure.

And now it's great because every time I go back home, I see him working with the kids from 5 to 12. They actually just won the winter league tournament back home. So it's pretty cool to see him working with the younger and the newer generation, you know?

Q. How has your pitching repertoire changed since last year in terms of pitches that you've improved or added?

SAM ALDEGHERI: I didn't add any pitch. I improved the change-up. Kyle Hendricks, I had the opportunity to play with him a little bit last year, and the same with T.A., Tyler Anderson. I asked them both about their changeup because, of course, it's been great for them.

So I asked them a couple of tips and advice. They gave it to me, what I needed to feel. I changed a little bit of the grip on the changeup. And it's been working really good. It's been great.

Q. If you think about Verona, your hometown, where are the spots, what are the names of the pubs or the bars in Italy where they should be watching the game, maybe outdoors or indoors in Verona tomorrow night?

SAM ALDEGHERI: Usually we didn't go out to bars to watch baseball games. I don't know if they're going to stream somewhere. I hope so. But I know a lot of fans are trying to meet altogether to watch the game.

Q. I wanted to ask you, growing up over there, who were some of your inspirations from Major League Baseball? Who were some guys you watched or looked up to as role models?

SAM ALDEGHERI: As the hitters, grew up watching Big Papi, David Ortiz. I grew up a Red Sox fan because my brother is a Yankee fan. He still is.

And then as a pitcher, I grew up watching Clayton Kershaw. That's why it was so emotional last week when I walked down the tunnel and he was right next to me. I wanted to ask him for a photo, but I'm really shy, so I didn't.

But hopefully we'll get to meet him in Miami soon. So I'll have the opportunity over there.

Q. What has it been like interacting with the -- you're a Major Leaguer, but all the other Major Leaguers who are from the USA and with Italian heritage, but you're Italian through and through? But what can you tell them about being Italian and how are they sort of representing the country that is your home?

SAM ALDEGHERI: Honestly, everyone's still trying to learn a little bit something new about each culture. For example, for me, I have Kikuchi on my team. I always ask him some stuff that's going on in Japan, how is the life over there. And he kind of does the same with me.

I like to know a lot of stuff, what's going on around the world and all this stuff, baseball side, not baseball side. So it's been pretty cool.

Q. Lastly, what do you think it will take, big picture, for Italy to produce more players like you? Maybe three years from now or six years from now, they'll have more guys like you on the team who actually grew up in Italy?

SAM ALDEGHERI: I feel like what we're doing right now has been really great. I know, as I said earlier, like, we're all the news in Italy, the papers, everything. So hopefully kids are going to look at it and be, okay, I'm not going to try soccer, like I did, but I'm going to try baseball, because I saw on TV and I like it and maybe they're going to fall in with the game like I did. That's my hope.

Next couple of years we're going to have a couple new complexes. They'll be great because that's what we're missing right now. We don't have like a really big complex or great complex. So that's been the limit.

Q. Can you share how baseball, when you were growing up in Italy, how the structure was over there? You obviously talk right now that there's not a big complex to learn baseball over there. But how baseball has grown up when you were living there?

SAM ALDEGHERI: I was lucky because I have two baseball fields pretty much next to my house. One is five minutes. The other one is 10 minutes. But as I said, the structures are not that great. We just have the baseball

field.

We don't have a complex with a weight room and all this stuff. We have one baseball field, and you need to do all the training and workouts over there. Not a lot of people trying to take care of it. It's a bit different.

I saw guys in Puerto Rico, it's the same. You guys have one baseball field. The players need to take care of it because no one else is going to do it, right?

But the last couple of years, I've seen like they're trying to invest a little bit more money and trying to take care of it, especially where I live. But we have a big city, Parma, which is big on baseball, and they have a lot of fields over there. They have one complex that has four fields. That's probably the best one we have in Italy.

Q. You have a winter league over there, like a (indiscernible) A league over there in Italy?

SAM ALDEGHERI: No, no we don't play winter ball.

Q. You have a professional league over there in Italy?

SAM ALDEGHERI: Yes, we do have a professional league. Kind of the same as the Major League. It goes from April or March until September.

Q. How do you describe that league?

SAM ALDEGHERI: I played there for in the top league, I played there for just two months, not even, before I signed with the Phillies and then a month during COVID.

I feel like for what I've seen last year, I feel like the (indiscernible) got better and I hope it's going to get better this year too. That's always going to make everyone more competitive, especially the Italian guys.

Q. You mentioned your soccer background. What position did you play and for how many years? Until what age did you play soccer?

SAM ALDEGHERI: I actually didn't play soccer in a club, but I was playing soccer almost every day with my friends.

I like to be a striker because Alessandro Del Piero, he was my favorite player growing up because I'm a Juventus fan. So striker was the best position. Score goals and go under the fans, it's probably the best feeling ever.

Q. And lastly on that, how many of the Italian American players, which guys have you been talking to and trying to convince them to be Juve fans



because Juve is your team?

SAM ALDEGHERI: Not a lot of them. They've been trying to get me more into American football. But I don't like it. I told them I am just for soccer. But hopefully they're going to like it after this tournament. After I'm going to share a couple of videos, maybe they're going to enjoy it a little bit more.

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