

# World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals

Friday, 13 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

## Team Italy

## Zach Dezenzo

### Workout Day Press Conference

**Q. First of all, playing these games in Houston, I've always noticed that no matter who the opponent is, you've gotten a really nice ovation when you've been announced, when you come to the plate. What has that been like for you?**

ZACH DEZENZO: Yeah, it's been really cool, honestly. Like just the familiarity of everything here has been awesome for me. I feel like I'm right at home and the fans make me feel the same way. So every time I step up to the plate, hearing the crowd, knowing they've got my back, regardless of what team I'm on, it's really a great feeling.

**Q. How far back do you go with Canzone, and can you trace back that relationship and what it means for a couple of Buckeyes to be playing together on this team?**

ZACH DEZENZO: I met that dude in 2017, my official visit to Ohio State when I was a recruit. So I met him almost 10 years ago. And we played together for one season, 2019 season. I was a freshman that year. He was a junior. We ended up winning the Big Ten Championship together. A really cool experience.

So we go a while back, and it's just really cool for me to share the field with him again.

**Q. With the tempo that Aldegheri pitches with, how much fun is it to play behind him, and what have you learned in the short time you guys have been teammates?**

ZACH DEZENZO: Our opening game against Brazil, he absolutely dominated. And playing third base for him was super easy. So, yeah, he's a really good pitcher, and he's also in our division as well. So it's going to be fun to just competing against him this year, too.

**Q. The deke that Antonacci had against Mexico at**



**second base, did you have a sense that was coming, have you ever seen anybody do that in the past? I'd love to hear your perspective on that one.**

ZACH DEZENZO: Unbelievable, unbelievable. That kid, being how young he is, just has a knack -- a super good talent. Unbelievable IQ on that play. I'm watching that from the dugout, and I saw it happen real time. I'm, like, there's actually no way that just happened. That was crazy.

So I've obviously seen dekes like that before. I've honestly done them myself before. Played a little shortstop growing up. I played it in college.

Just a game within the game. But for him to go all out and lay out in the dirt like that, I hadn't quite seen anything like that before.

**Q. The connection to Italy, what are the things you've learned about your roots and the city where your family came from, I'd love to know where it is? And have you gone through the process to develop more of a connection to those roots over there?**

ZACH DEZENZO: To be honest with you, I don't have much information on the origins of where my family came from. I had a brief conversation with my grandpa. He's getting a bit older now, so his memory is not quite what it used to be.

But the information that I gathered was that we were from southern Italy, and that was kind of the general area of where my family came from. And he was only able to give me some basic information about who it was and when they came over. But other than that, I don't have a ton of information on it.

**Q. Tell me a little bit, I'm not Italian American, but what is it like when you have that Italian last name? You grew up over here, but what does Italy mean to you in your case, and why is it important to be representing that country in a tournament like this?**

ZACH DEZENZO: I think if you go back, the history of just Italian Americans that came over, a lot were overlooked, a



lot were not given exactly the greatest opportunities right away. They had to work really hard, had to earn everything that came with being an Italian American and emigrating over from the country.

And I just think the hard work, the work ethic and just the drive and discipline that comes with being an Italian American is something that I try to hold on to. And that's something that I've kind of learned in this whole process too.

**Q. Are there things that bind you guys? I mean, what are some of the things that bind you guys as a team? Being American mostly, Americans who are of Italian descent, what's that common feeling like?**

ZACH DEZENZO: Yeah, I think it just, the culture that comes with being an Italian American, everybody here has gotten to know one another in such a short period of time and we've all bonded so close because we do all share that one common thing, being Italian Americans.

I think that there's an overall just sense of family that comes with being an Italian American, and everybody welcomes each other with open arms. I think it's just created this sense of family-like culture that we have here. And I think it's been great.

**Q. Have you had a chance to go over there ever and see the homeland for yourself?**

ZACH DEZENZO: I've actually not been over there. It's honestly been a bucket-list item of mine for a few years now. The more that I see how beautiful the country is and just how much there is to do and explore and learn about over there, the more I just am absolutely champing at the bit to get over there.

So hopefully soon. If not this offseason, maybe next offseason. So we'll see.

**Q. After Vinnie's three-homer game, obviously he's been such an inspirational leader for you, what was your view of him throughout that day? He was kind of maybe feeling anxious to get on the board. He had the bunt attempt at the beginning. What was he saying? What was it like to be around him that day?**

ZACH DEZENZO: First of all, it's tough hitting behind that guy when he's doing that every at-bat. I'll tell you that right now. I felt like every fastball I got was a tick or two higher in velos just because the pitchers being upset or whatever.

I talked to Vinnie the day before that three-homer game, and I told him, like, I just have a ton of respect for the

leader that you are. I know what you're going through right now. I know you're grinding up at the plate. And I know you're continuing to show up to the field every day with a smile on your face and you're leading us well. And I just told him that. And I said, I respect the heck out of you for that. He's the same guy every day, no matter what, and you're a great leader.

And I think he appreciated that. And turns around the next day and has three homers. It's just unbelievable. So kudos to him, man. He just keeps showing up.

**Q. Lastly, the cultural exchange of American football and Italian football, have you tried to recruit any of your Italian-born teammates to become Buckeyes fans or Browns fans or vice versa? Have any of them tried to get you to cheer for their Italian soccer teams?**

ZACH DEZENZO: To be honest, we don't talk a lot about other sports. There is some -- in the locker room, we have a Michigan guy, Jon Berti. We also have another Michigan guy, Jakob Marsee. I believe he went to Central Michigan.

But we just bond over baseball, man, to be honest with you. It's a great family-like atmosphere. Yeah, we just talk baseball and we get to know one another. So it's been great.

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