

The VI World Baseball Classic will be held in March 2026

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Miami, March 22 (AP) - The 6th World Baseball Classic will take place in March 2026. The organizers determined that the weeks that coincide with Major League Baseball's preseason training will outweigh the other options: after the World Series or in the middle of the regular campaign.

Ahead of Tuesday's U.S.-Japan finale, MLB commissioner Rob Manfred said club owners and general managers will have to be persuaded to facilitate greater pitcher participation in the selections.

Since its debut in 2006, the classic has been staged in March, shortly before the start of the regular season in MLB, Japan and South Korea.

"It hurts our heads to talk so much about dates. There's no perfect time. You really can't after the playoffs because of the long inactivity of a lot of ballplayers. There was a question of doing something in the

middle of the season. Somewhere in the middle, even if it's not perfect, is the best time," Manfred said.

Many MLB teams kept pitchers from participating so they could focus on the start of the season with their clubs.

"From a competitive perspective, I think the most important thing is to keep working with our clubs, on pitching," he added.

"Of course, the pitchers we have now are excellent, but we would like the pitchers to be of the same quality as the position players," he said.

Two MLB stars were injured during the 5th World Baseball Classic. New York Mets closer Edwin Díaz hurt his knee during a Puerto Rican victory celebration last week and underwent surgery that will cost him the entire season.

Houston Astros second baseman Jose Altuve suffered a fractured thumb on his right hand when he was hit by a ball in Venezuela's quarterfinal loss and needs surgery that could keep him out for an as-yet undetermined amount of time.

"Perhaps the best testimony was the response of the players after Diaz's unfortunate injury, how they came out to support the tournament. It's a sign of how much they value the tournament," Manfred said.

He added that the Classic will continue to cover the insurance policies of the ballplayers representing their national teams. "You can't put on this tournament without insurance for the players. It is bad enough that the teams assume the risk for an injury and at the same time have to pay. That doesn't seem fair to me," he said.

Manfred indicated that they are willing to return to Puerto Rico and even play in the Dominican Republic. Each edition has had games in Japan. In Latin America it has been played in Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Unlike the World Cup in soccer, Manfred does not intend for the classic to become a magnitude above the playoffs and the MLB World Series.

"I don't anticipate it and I really don't want the tournament to overtake our traditional format. I think the World Series will remain the World Series...This is another competition. We are doing it so that baseball grows and has a greater international reach," he concluded.

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