



The UConn Huskies playing against Creighton at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn. The Huskies won with a final score of 100-51.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CONNOR SHARP,
PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

THE ROAD TO MIAMI: EARLY STORYLINES FROM THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC

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The World Baseball Classic has been hyped up in the baseball community for months, with the tournament holding the highest expectations since its inception in 2006. Currently, the front-runners USA, Japan and the Dominican Republic have been performing as expected. Venezuela and Puerto Rico are following closely behind.

The USA has been strong; however, they were given a scare early in the tournament from Great Britain, who held a 1-0 lead early. That lead was short-lived, as Kyle Schwarber eventually gave the U.S. a home run to capture their second win of the tournament. Japan has also been impressive as they play at home in round one. Masataka Yoshida, one of the hottest players in the tournament, has propelled Japan to first place in their group

with big wins over Australia and Korea. The Dominican Republic has also been strong, as they've dominated pool play in Miami. The team scored 24 runs combined in games against Nicaragua and the Netherlands and will look to continue that momentum in round two. Below the powerhouses, Venezuela secured two big wins, a notable 11-3 victory over Israel, on Saturday night and a 6-2 win over the Netherlands Friday night. They are led by Luis Arraez, who is 5-8 from the

plate so far in the tournament. Puerto Rico has also been great as they have been lively in front of their home fans. The group beat Panama on a walk-off homer to capture a key win in the tournament. The story of the tournament is Italy, who have won their first two

games. They will play the USA next, which should be a hard task, but if things go as predicted and they lose, it could set up a potential winner-take-all for the second spot in their group against Mexico in their final game of first round play. At the bottom of the tournament are Brazil and the Czech Republic, who have both already finished last in group play. The USA, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Japan, are guaranteed to qualify for the next round. It will be interesting to see how managers handle players who are already restricted as assets when their teams have to play extra innings or crucial games.



Dominican Republic player Fernando Tatis, Jr celebrated a grand slam against team Israel. The Dominican Republic are considered one of the favorites for the World Baseball Classic. PHOTO COURTESY OF @MLB ON INSTAGRAM.