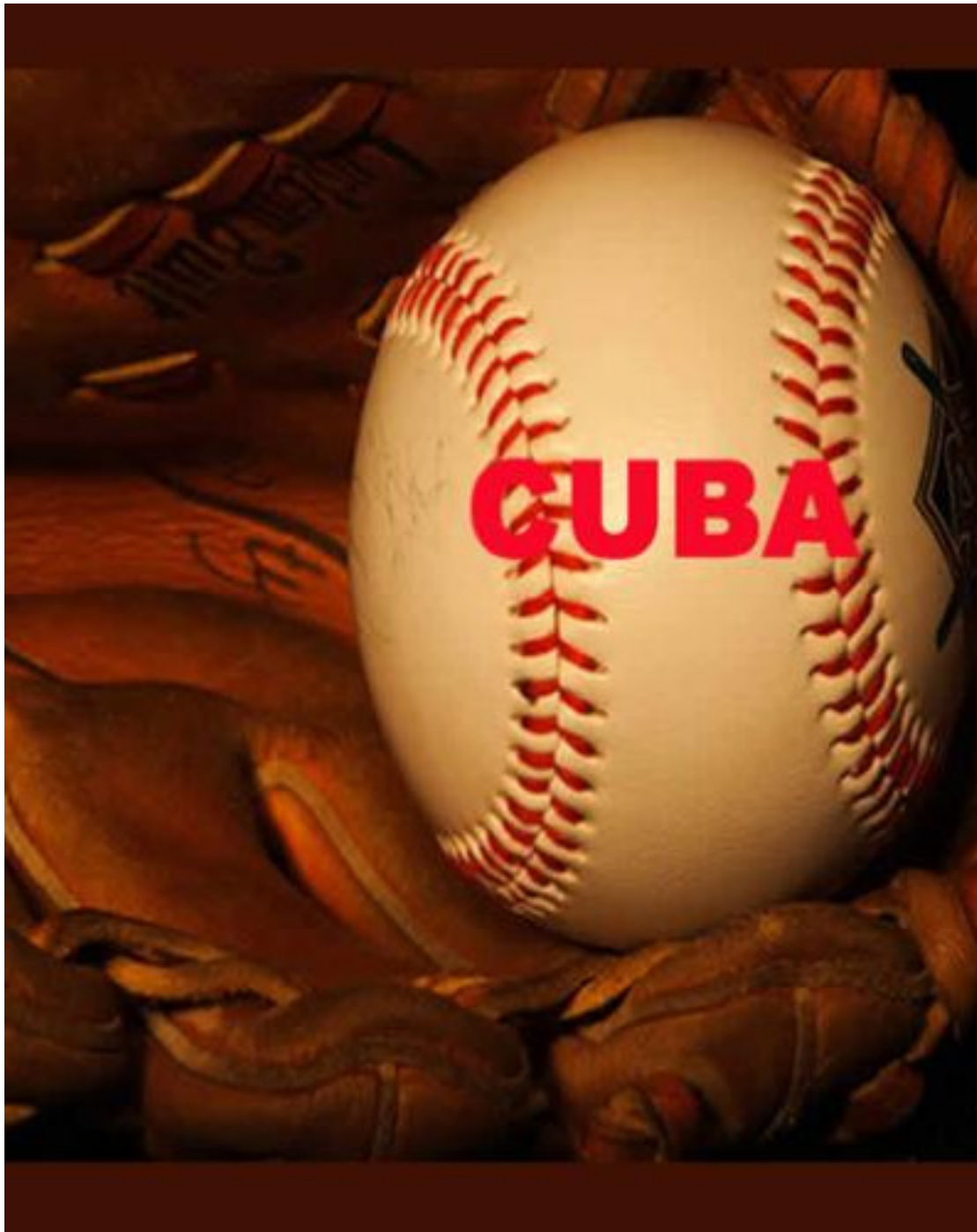


*Cuba to debut against Argentina  
in the U-23 Pan American  
Baseball Championship*

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Aguascalientes, June 10 (JIT)-- After a technical meeting of about two hours, held Thursday night, all the coordinates of the U-23 Pan American Baseball Championship to be held from June 10 to 19 in this city in the central region of Mexico have been finalized.

Ultimately, there will be seven teams in competition, after the absence of the strong Dominican squad for reasons that "move" between visa difficulties and financial limitations.

What is certain is that the teams of Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Cuba will be competing for medals and tickets to the World Cup (four).

The matches will be played in seven innings at 10:00, 12:00, 12:30, 13:30 and 14:30 local time, depending on the venue, and three stadiums in the region will be used...

The main home of the event will be the Romo Chavez Park, headquarters of the professional club Rieleros de Aguascalientes; the Gonzalo Villalobos (Ferrocarilero) stadium and the Unidad Deportiva San Pancho stadium, about 40 minutes away from this city by road.

Cuba's schedule has been confirmed as follows: this Friday they will debut against Argentina at 12:00 local time (one more in Cuba); on Saturday they will face Venezuela at 10:00; on Sunday against Puerto Rico at 10:00; on Monday against Nicaragua at 14:30; on Tuesday against Guatemala at 12:00; on Wednesday they will rest and on Thursday they will close the preliminary phase against Mexico at 12:30.

The first four places in the table will obtain World Cup tickets and will compete for the medals on the weekend. The semifinals will be based on 1st vs. 4th and 2nd vs. 3rd.

Armando Jhonson, helmsman of the Cuban team, confirmed left-hander Naykel Cruz as the starter against the Argentines, with the aim of getting ahead in the tournament and quickly enrolling him in the pitching rotation.

At the time of writing this note, the coaching staff is analyzing the game schedule and the available information on the opponents to define the possible offensive lineups.

#### NAYKEL SPEAKS

With the experience of having pitched in last year's U-23 World Championship and in the First Pan American Junior Games in Cali, Naykel Cruz carries great responsibility within the Cuban staff in Aguascalientes.

About her designation to pitch the first challenge, she commented that she had already been given that possibility from Cuba, and that starting this Friday will allow her to repeat in the rotation in key games.

He pointed out that despite the altitude above sea level in this city, they have been able to adapt quickly and the most important thing is the confidence that the results will come out.

When asked about the qualities of the team, he highlighted the unity, the joy and the focus on the task ahead. He also praised the quality of the pitching and defense within this group.

#### FIRST DAY ON THE FIELD

The team led by Jhonson had its first training session on Wednesday at the Gonzalo Villalobos stadium, the well-known Ferrocarilero, where it will make its debut this Friday against Argentina.

The main emphasis was placed on physical recovery, after the long road trip from the Aztec capital, and on defensive work.

Jhonson insisted that in these categories the offense does not predominate, so that good pitching and defense decide games.

Separating pitchers and position players, they covered a session of close to two hours, with a pleasant temperature and on grass that stops the ball somewhat, while in the air it seems to "walk" at full speed.

Jhonson and the rest of the coaching staff addressed key issues of the game, such as sign management, concentration, tactical plays and, above all, the importance of avoiding mistakes.

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<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/deportes/290307-cuba-to-debut-against-argentina-in-the-u-23-pan-american-baseball-championship>



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