

# *Ariel could be fourth bat for Nippon Ham Fighters*

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**Photo credit: Chunichi Dragons**

Havana, December 23 (RHC)-- Atsunori Inaba, former manager of the Japanese baseball team and current general manager of the Nippon Ham Wrestlers, said Thursday in an interview that Cuban Ariel Martinez has a good chance of becoming the team's fourth bat in 2023.

"Martinez is a player we have been watching for some time. His batting combines good average with power and he could become a star in our lineup," he explained to Tokyo Sports Web.

"Even though he is coming to a new league, he has already played three seasons in Japan and that experience is a big advantage. Also, he is only 26 years old and can still improve his game a lot," he added.

"I've heard that he likes to study and analyze data a lot, so he should be able to adapt quickly to opposing pitchers. I have high expectations for him in 2023," he concluded.

Martinez came to NPB in 2018 with the Chunichi Dragons. He worked in the organization's player development program until mid-2020. At that point, he was promoted to the top flight, where he remained until this year.

At the end of the 2022 season, he asked the team to release him so he could pursue the opportunity to become a starter with another franchise and Nippon Ham decided to take a gamble on him. The contract between both parties was signed in Havana.

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