

Classic's Cuba celebrates second win in Okinawa



Guibert, pair of doubles and three RBIs. Photo: Yuhki Ohboshi

Havana, February 21 (RHC)-- The Cuba team beat Golondrinas de Yakult, champion of the Japanese Central League, 10x4 on Tuesday as part of its preparation for the V World Baseball Classic.

With 16 hits, including five doubles and a home run, the Caribbeans backed up the work of starter and winner José Ramón Rodríguez and four other pitchers.

"Pleased with the behavior of the offense and the contribution of the pitching, which has been used as we designed it, according to the objectives for this stage," said mentor Armando Johnson.

It was the second victory for the visiting team in Okinawa, after losing 2x11 to Nippon Ham Fighters and 3x2 over Chunichi Dragons.

In what turned out to be their penultimate outing in that prefecture, the team from the largest island in the Caribbean activated the board in the third inning against starter Reiji Kozawa, who took the setback.

Yoelkis Guibert hit the first of his two runs and drove in a pair of runs as a prelude to a chapter of five other scores in which four hits of that magnitude had a lot to do with it.

"It's the result of the work done to get in shape for the competition," said the right fielder, satisfied with his adjustment to the demands of the opposing pitchers.

From the mound that artillery had Hirotohi Takanashi as a victim, who also admitted the home run with which Guillermo García brought his payroll's final three to the plate in the fifth inning.

"I enjoyed being part of the preparation even though I'm not part of the team for the event, and I'm glad to contribute to this result," said the Chunichi Dragons' contract boy.

The hosts made one in the third act, the only one on Rodriguez's account and driven in by Yu Matsumoto, their best man on offense (4-2).

After being dominated by Raidel Martínez and Javier Mirabal, they made three to Yeudis Reyes. Two came in the seventh, with a sacrifice fly by Sho Matzuy and a triple by Soum Uchiyama, and one in the next with a home run by Yoshihiro Akahane.

Frank Abel Álvarez did his homework in the ninth and the scoreboard showed a total of 10-16-0 for the winners and 4-9-1 for the Japanese.

This Wednesday the Cubans will face the Giants and manager Pedro Luis Lazo announced Yariel Rodriguez as the starter.

CUBA AT BAT

Roel Santos (cf) 5-3, 1 IC, 1 2B

Yoelkis Guibert (rf) 5-2, 3 IC, 2 2B

Yurisbel Gracial (3b) 3-2, 1 CI

Alfredo Despaigne (bd) 5-1

Yadir Drake (1b) 5-3

Ariel Martínez (r) 3-2, 1 IC, 1 2B

Erisbel Arruebarruena (ss) 3-1, 1 CI, 1 2B

Guillermo García (lf) 4-1, 3 CI, 1 HR

Yadil Mujica (2b) 3-0

Andrys Perez (entered for Ariel) 2-0

Luis Vicente Mateo (entered for Arruebarruena) 2-1

CUBAN PITCHING

José Ramón Rodríguez (3.0) 5H, 1C, 2K, 1BB

Raidel Martinez (1.0) 2K

Javier Mirabal (2.0) 1H, 1K, 1BB

Yeudis Reyes (1.2) 2H, 3C, 2BB

Frank Abel Álvarez (1.1) 1H, 1BB.



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