

Elian Leyva to open Cuba's fifth game in Japan



Elian Leyva

Havana, February 22 (RR) - Right-hander Elián Leyva, one of the main pitchers of the Cuba team for the V World Baseball Classic, will open Thursday (Wednesday night in Cuba) the fifth game of the Cuban national team's warm-up in Japan against the Softbank Falcons.

A 33-year-old native of the town of San Jose, in the western province of Mayabeque, Leyva has been training with the Cuba team in Okinawa for a few days and believes that the Cuban team has the quality to fight in the Classic.

"Since I arrived I feel good vibes, everything has worked well. We have another training system, something that they have respected us and we have also received the advice given to us by the coaches."

Leyva, who comes from having a formidable performance with the Naranjeros de Hermosillo in the ARCO Pacific League of Mexico, assured that he is willing to fulfill the role entrusted to him by the management.

"I don't choose opponents to pitch against, I am at the team's disposal, however they want to use me and against any opponent, I will be ready."

Elian Leyva considers that the Cuba team can "fight" in the World Classic.

"The national team has good players, I think we can do a good role. We don't know how far we will go, because everyone is preparing well. Let's hope that luck is on our side, that victories come and that we can advance as far as possible."

Leyva knows that in Cuba the fans will be watching the national team's performance in the Classic.

"We are going to fight pitch by pitch, turn by turn, out by out, inning by inning, to achieve the victories we want so much. We know that the fans know baseball and we are going to use that to their advantage to give them a good time.

Elian Leyva had a 7-3 record in the ARCO Pacific League, 2.44 PCL, and in 51.2 innings he struck out 55.

So far, the Cuban national team is 2-2 in its four practice games held in Japan ahead of the Classic.

By Guillermo Rodríguez, from Radio Rebelde

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