

*Cuba suffers its second setback in
Baseball Classic and jeopardizes
advancement to next round*



Italy vs Cuba

Havana, March 9 (RHC) - The Cuban baseball team suffered its second loss in a row in the 5th World Baseball Classic on Thursday, losing in extra-inning to Italy 6-3 at the Intercontinental Stadium in Taipei, China.

It was a tense game, which reached the ninth tied at two and both mentors had to appeal to all their wisdom. Former major leaguer and Hall of Famer Mike Piazza won the game against newcomer Armando Johnson.

After several threats from Team Cuba, Italy broke the cellophane in the sixth inning when they gave three hits to reliever José Ramón Rodríguez and his replacement, left-hander Naykel allowed Brett Sullivan's towering sacrifice fly.

The Bambinos extended the lead in the seventh, in which after Nicky Lopez's hit, the team management brought in star player Liván Moinelo, but the ninth hitter Miles Mastrobuoni hit a double to left, a hit that former major leaguer Yoenis Céspedes managed to touch with his glove.

Cuba took the lead in the seventh on a hit and error by Erisbel Arruebarrena and a towering rocket by Lorenzo Quintana, and equalized in the eighth on a double by captain Alfredo Despaigne and a hit by Arruebarrena.

The denouement came in the tenth, when with a man on second by the Manfred Rule, the firefighter Raidel Martínez, with great effort as he was convalescing from a flu, allowed John Valente's hit, which towed Frelick with the first of the inning, and then his reliever, the left-handed Onelki García, had an unsuccessful outing.

The former major leaguer received a disrespectful salute from Dominic Fletcher, who hit a double to the first delivery and brought in another, and after the intentional ticket to David Fletcher, he accepted a rocket from Nick Lopez that brought in two more.

Cuba scored one in the tenth on a hit by Luis Robert with Yoelkis Guibert on second.

Cuba is now 0-2 and went to the basement of the A key, based in Taichung. The Netherlands leads (2-0), after maintaining its undefeated record by defeating Panama 3-1 in a close duel, with home runs by major leaguers Xanders Bogaerts and Jurickson Profar. Italy is 1-0 and Panama 1-1.

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