

Cuba wins and stays alive in World Baseball Classic

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By Orlando González Cruz.

Havana, March 10 (RHC)-- Cuba's baseball team defeated Panama by a score of 13 to 4 today and remains alive in the V World Baseball Classic.

The Antilleans took the field at the Intercontinental Stadium of Taichung urging for a victory to keep mathematical options of qualifying to the second round of the tournament, and went ahead from the very first chapter with a run driven in by Alfredo Despaigne's double.

In the top of the second, another two-run homer, this one by Yadil Mujica, added one more run to the scoreboard, but at the end of that same chapter, the Panamanians reached a four-run run and made starter Ronald Bolaños jump off the mound.

An error in Yoan Moncada's throw to the first outfield, a pair of tickets, two hits and Rubén Tejeda's home run underpinned the Central Americans' harvest.

When it seemed that the World Cup dream was turning into a nightmare, the sixth inning became the lucky one for the Cubans, as they tied and took the lead against the loser of the game, Matt Hardy, with four runs.

It was worth getting up early for the fans of our national team, as the island's offense woke up (and in what a way) to support the pitchers, who, except for very specific moments, have behaved at the height during the entire fair.

The Cubans added five more runs in the seventh and two in the eighth, to complete 13, also hitting 21 hits, a record for national teams in the Classic.

Yadir Drake, from Matanzas, was the big man with the lumber when he compiled 4-4 in the challenge.

Moncada and Luis Robert's awakening at bat was an incentive, and today they contributed what is expected of them, with six RBIs between them.

Miguel Romero, in the role of reliever, filed the victory in his record and now Cuba still has a chance to advance, which always depends on beating Taipei in the closing game and a tie-breaker among several teams; hence the importance of the huge score achieved today.

The Cubans will finish the qualifying stage tomorrow Saturday at 11:00 pm, when they will face the local Taipei of China, with the obligation to win and rely on mathematics.

Team Cuba on the offensive today:

Roel Santos (5-3, 1K)

Yoan Moncada (5-3, 2b, 4Ci)

Luis Robert Jr. (6-2, 2Ci, 1K)

Alfredo Despaigne (5-2, 1Ci)

Erisbel Arruebarrena (4-2, 2b, 1K)

Ariel Martinez (4-0, 2K)

Yoelkis Guibert (3-1)

Yadir Drake (4-4, 2b, 2Ci)

Yadil Mujica (4-3, 2b, 4Ci)

Yurisbel Gracial (1-1, 3b)

Dayan Garcia (1-0)

Luis V. Mateo (1-0, 1K)

Andrys Perez (1-0, 1K).

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