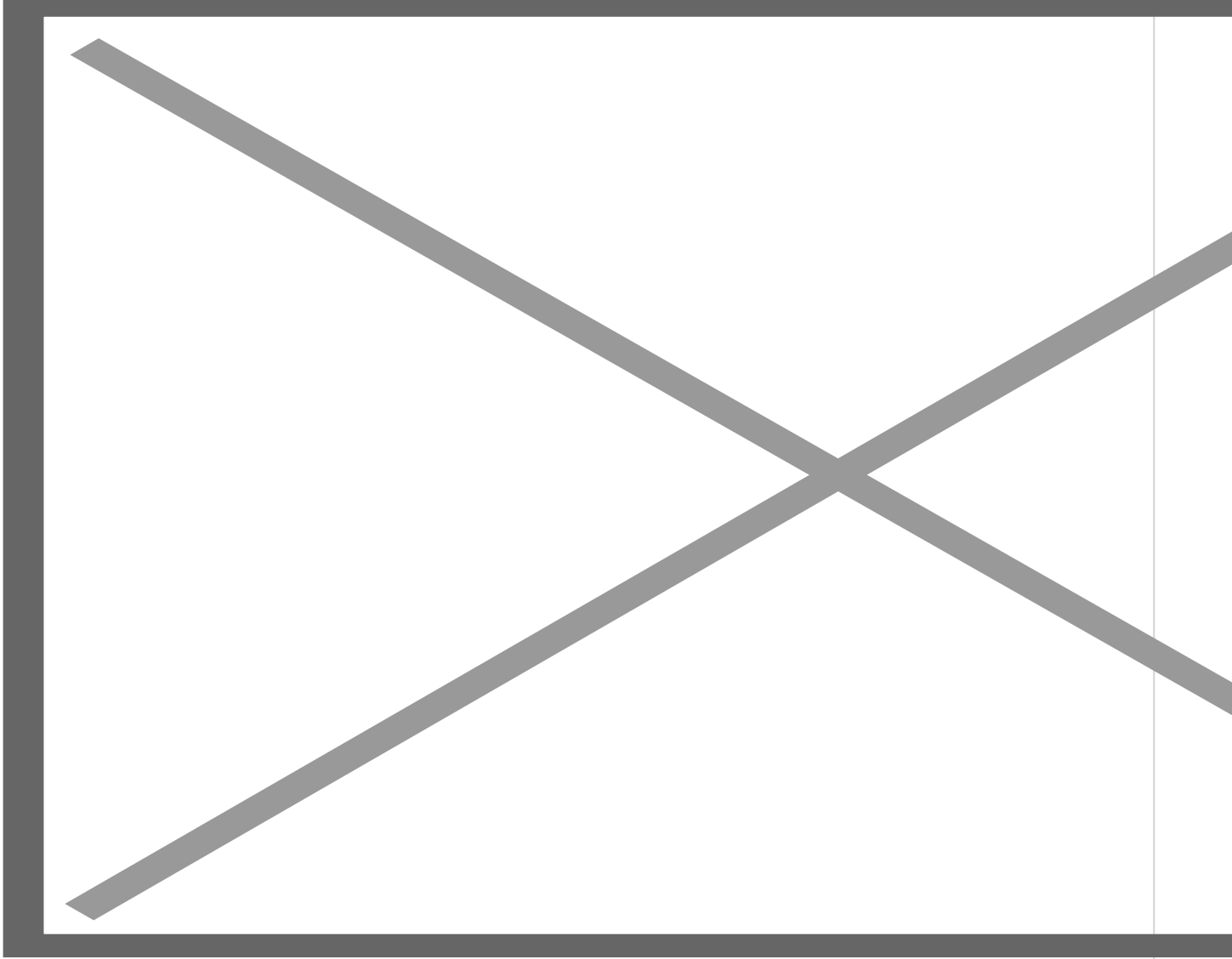


Nicaragua and Colombia go for gold in U23 Baseball Pre-World Cup

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Managua, November. 30 (PL) - The teams of Nicaragua and Colombia finished as leaders in their respective groups and will play today for the gold medal in the Pre-World Baseball Championship for the under-23 age group.

Both teams also secured spots for next year's World Cup in China, along with Puerto Rico and Venezuela, the runners-up, the last places that guaranteed a ticket to the World Cup.

The biggest rivalry for position in the standings took place in the preliminary segment B, where there was a three-way tie between Venezuela, Cuba and Panama, all at 3-2, decided by Team Quality Balance (TQB) in favor of the Morochos.

Despite losing 1-3 to the Cafeteros in their concluding match of the preliminary phase, the Venezuelans benefited from Panama's 15-11 victory over Cuba in the closing game of the elimination segment.

The key in the calculation of the TQB was in the beating the Morochos gave to the Panamanians with a 13-1 slate and such disproportion in the scoreboard influenced the final index.

Cuba needed to beat the Canal Islanders to join the Colombians in the trip to China, but its pitching was unable to withstand the offense, which among 13 hits included a pair of home runs, one with the bases loaded by Erasmo Caballero and the other by Julio Gonzalez with a runner on.

In the other key, the locals defeated Mexico 6-2 and Puerto Rico overcame the Dominican Republic (13-7), with which both teams qualified for the World Championship of the category.

This Thursday, before the title match, Venezuela and Puerto Rico will face each other for the bronze medal.

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