

Cuba's U-23 team celebrates advancing to semifinals

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Aguascalientes, June 15 (JIT) - By a score of 10 to 2 over Guatemala, Cuba arrives to the semifinals of the 2022 Pan American Baseball Under-23 Championship, and more importantly, in the world championship of the category that will be hosted by Taiwan in October of this year.

After back-to-back victories against Argentina, Venezuela and Puerto Rico, and a stumble against Nicaragua, the task this Tuesday was to beat the weak team of Guatemala, synonymous of fulfilling the first objectives brought to this state in the central region of Mexico.

Armando Johnson's trump card was the left-hander Enyer Fernandez, who did not reach his maximum speed, but was dominant and showed a good slider.

After leaving the Guatemalans at zero for four innings, the Cuban management gave way to relievers Randy Cueto and Alex Guerra, who also left the scoreboard immaculate.

With the purpose of keeping him active and not for the requirements of the game, logically, Johnson assigned closer Marlon Vega for the seventh inning. The Mayabechense came out hard, but without his

usual control, so he threw a man out and in search of the strike zone, he tolerated a long home run through left field by Julio Aguilar.

The two runs of the Central Americans fell just before the strikeout that decreed the end of the game, with victory for Enyer and defeat for the opposing starter, right-hander José Quezada.

The Cuban offensive production took longer than expected perhaps, although the lead in the game was established in the very first inning. There, no less than four tickets, two strikeouts and a hit by a pitch to the bullpen were combined. No hits.

The "zafra" really began in the fourth inning, when Quezada's "mañas" were not enough for more dominance. After Dany Oramas was given a ticket, Alfredo Fadruga hit his first home run of the game all over the left side of the Gonzalo Villalobos stadium, the well-known Ferrocarrilero.

Then Christian Rodriguez reached the first base due to an error by the bartender, Francisco Venecia scored with an RBI and Villaclareño Yuri Fernandez - today's starter in the middle infield - hit a run-scoring run that brought the third run of the game and fired Quezada.

The scene was then set for the catcher from Matanzas to start the first reliever with a bunt over the left fence that drove in three more runs and left the score at 7x0.

The eighth run came in the following episode after two outs, thanks to line drives to Fadruga and Javier Carabeo, and Alejandro Escobar's driving shot.

The closing of the harvest, in the top of the seventh inning, would reserve Cuba's third home run of the game, on account of the first in the game, Francisco Venecia, from Granma. A line drive over the right field fence... For the tenth run, singles by Carlos Rodríguez and Escobar plus a wild pitch by the pitcher. That was enough.

On this day of rest for the Mexicans, Nicaragua defeated Argentina 5x0 and Venezuela took an important step by beating Puerto Rico 6x3.

Venezuela, Guatemala vs. Argentina and Puerto Rico vs. Mexico.

The Aztecs lead the standings with 4-0, ahead of Cuba (4-1), Nicaragua (3-1), Puerto Rico (2-2), Venezuela (2-2), Guatemala (0-4) and Argentina (0-5).

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