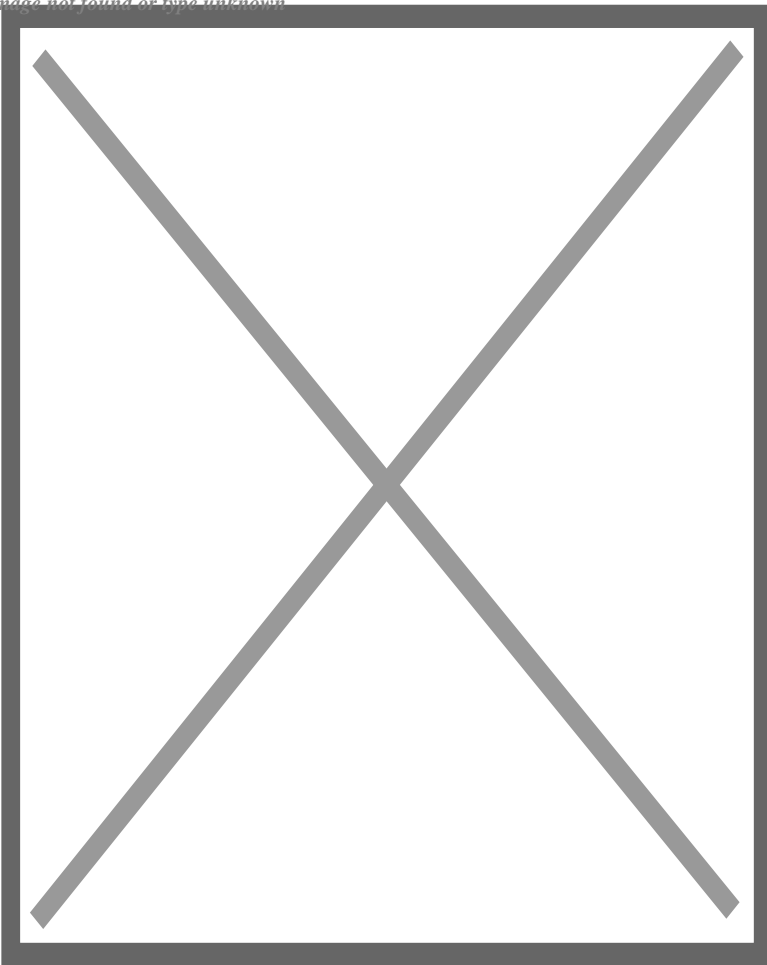


Mexico defeats Cuba in U-23 Pan American Baseball Championship

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Havana, June 17 (JIT) - The Cuban national team could not decipher the Mexican pitching and was defeated on Thursday, by a 3-0 shutout, in the last day of the qualifying phase of the 2022 Pan American

Baseball Under-23 Championship, held in this central Mexican state.

Two righties, starter Víctor Manuel Buelna (6.0 innings) and closer Jordan Suárez (1.0), were in charge of hanging the 21 outs of the game played at the Romo Chávez main stadium in front of a large crowd.

Buelna showed speed and control, tolerating only two hits (one solid), giving away two tickets and striking out eight. Suarez's closing was at a one, two and three outs pace.

The only solid connection of the Cubans was on the account of shortstop Luis Rojas, a line drive between left and center field that tried to make a run and was put out at second base. The other hit ended up on the score sheet as an infield hit by lead-off man Francisco Venecia.

The Cuban starter, Michel Cabrera, from Holguín, tolerated a two-run home run in the second inning, after a pair of outs and with a breaking pitch that stayed in the zone and was pushed over the right fence by the seventh man in the Aztecs' lineup, designated player Mario Cabrera.

In the fourth inning, Victor Ruiz and Carlos Pacheco had a pair of hits, and Professor Armando Johnson decided that enough was enough. To his rescue came right-hander Yulián Martínez, who prevented a run by forcing a fly to center and striking out.

However, the Mayabechense would tolerate a pair of tubeyes in the fifth episode, by Roberto Méndez and Héctor Mora, with which the score was definitively 3x0 on the board. Righties Marlon Vega and Randy Cueto also pitched in the box to quell small rebellions of the hosts.

On Thursday, Venezuela defeated Guatemala 6x0 and Puerto Rico 10x2 against Nicaragua. Thus, the hosts led the standings with 6-0, ahead of Nicaragua and Cuba (4-2), Venezuela and Puerto Rico (3-3), Argentina (1-5) and Guatemala (0-6).

The fourth ticket to the semifinals and to the World Cup in Taiwan, next October, went to the Morochos, as they defeated the Puerto Ricans in their particular duel a few days ago.

Next Saturday, in the semifinals, Nicaragua will host Cuba at 10:00 local time (one more on the Island); and the Aztecs will host the Venezuelans at 13:30, all at the Romo Chavez stadium, home of the professional team Rieleros de Aguascalientes.

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