

Manfred acknowledges that he cannot intercede in Cuba's call-up to the World Classic

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His words, which have come to function in some as the "discovery of cold water", respond to the pressures imposed from Miami by the promoters of the Association of Professional Cuban Ballplayers, a group that has recently emerged with clear and declared political objectives.

In addition to trying to attack the FCB and the stability of its international relations, the Association intends to obtain the power to present a team to the 2023 World Baseball Classic, in clear usurpation of the legitimate rights granted for decades to the Cuban federation of this sport.

Its promoters have done a lot of lobbying in recent weeks to achieve their purposes, condemning above all that the FCB excludes from its rosters players who have left delegations in international events of different levels.

Manfred simply reminded journalists that the World Baseball Classic is endorsed by the World Baseball and Softball Confederation (WBSC), the governing body of this sport at the international level.

"International competitions have their rules, like the Classic, to be endorsed," Manfred told the Baseball Writers Association of America. "One of those rules is that the Cuban Baseball Federation selects its team members," he added.

The FCB has reiterated that it is not a government entity, that it operates legitimately on the island and has full recognition from international baseball organizations.

It has also defended its right to summon athletes for its national teams, and to consider that the abandonment of a Cuban team during an international competition qualifies as the most serious offense that an athlete can commit, from a sporting, ethical and moral point of view, without entering into political readings.

In the last few hours we have heard laments, accusations and calls to senators and congressmen to put pressure on the MLB for a "decision" or rather for a statement that was obvious from the beginning.

No one in their right mind, wanting to protect the Classic and the many alliances that enable it, would overthrow the leading and well-earned role of the BCF. Besides incurring a textbook aggression, it would set a lousy precedent for the Olympic movement. Let's remember that the WBSC is also based in Lausanne, very close to the IOC.

Apparently, the 2023 Classic is starting to warm up with the right balls. We shall see...

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