

Naikel Cruz on Thursday in Cuba's U-23 World Cup opener

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Naykel Cruz

Havana, October 13 (RHC) - Left-hander Naikel Cruz will be the starter against Puerto Rico in Cuba's first game at the Under-23 Baseball World Cup, to be held in Taiwan.

Naikel is one of the most experienced players on the Cuban U-23 roster, along with catcher and team captain Andrys Perez.

"I have gained in confidence, it will be my fifth U-23 event and in each of them I have been able to learn a lot," Naikel Cruz told Radio Rebelde.

The left-hander was the last player to join the island's pre-selection, after his stint in the Mexican League with the "Piratas" of Campeche.

Alain Alvarez, mentor of the Cuban national team, announced the starting lineup against the Puerto Ricans, in which the third and fourth bats are Pedro Pablo Revilla (1B) and Guillermo García (BD).

The order announced by Alvarez is as follows: Cristian Rodriguez (SS), Christian Hidalgo (RF), Revilla, Garcia, Yuri Fernandez (3B), Dany Oramas (LF), Dairon Montalvo (CF), Andrys Perez (C), Carlos Rodriguez (2B).

The Cubans' opening game against the Puerto Ricans is scheduled for Thursday night (10:00 p.m.), Cuban time.

The U-23 World Cup was inaugurated this Thursday in the presence of the president of the World Baseball Softball-Softball Confederation (WBSC), Italian Riccardo Fraccari.

"I want to express my deep gratitude to our hosts, said Fraccari, during the opening ceremony. "We feel at home here."

Under a light drizzle, Fraccari welcomed the 12 participating teams and guests of honor during the Opening Ceremony.

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