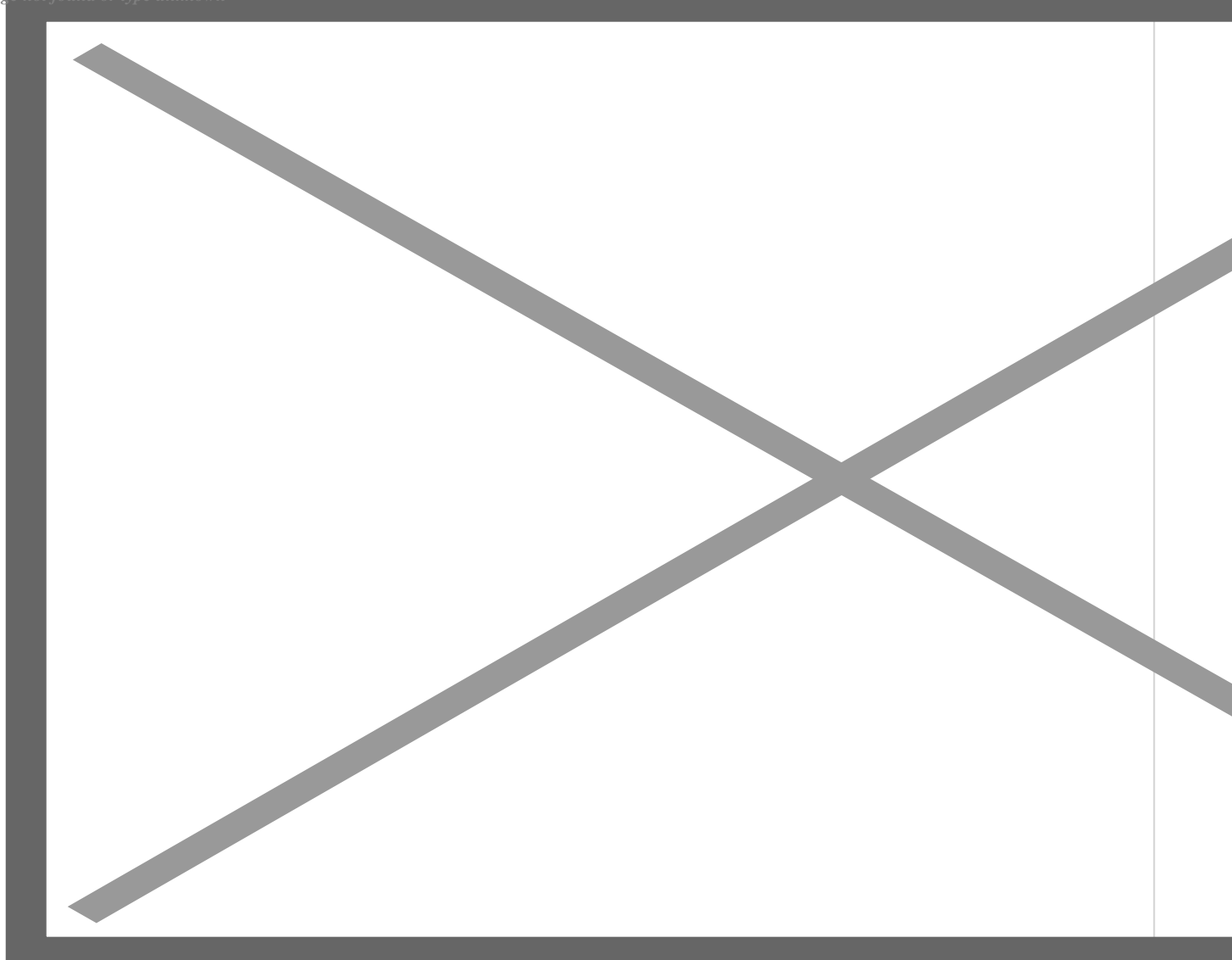


Former major leaguer declines to represent Cuba in the World Classic

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Yoan Lopez

Havana, January 23 (PL) - Pitcher Yoan Lopez, a former member of the Arizona Diamondbacks and New York Mets in the U.S. Major Leagues, declined to represent Cuba in the V World Baseball Classic.

In a message on its official Twitter account, the Cuban Baseball Federation (FCB) informed of the right-handed pitcher's withdrawal from its pre-selection of 50 players for the March 8-21 event, with the participation of 20 national teams.

Yoan Lopez reported that he appreciates but declines the call-up to the Cuba team to the V World Baseball Classic, the organization said on Sunday afternoon on the social network.

Also, the entity added: We respect his will to focus on issues related to his signing with Yomiuri Giants. Thank you for wishing us success. Other opportunities will come.

A few weeks ago, the flamethrower, born 30 years ago in the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud, left the U.S. system and is getting ready for a new adventure in the Japanese Professional League, considered the second most powerful on the planet.

According to experts, the lanky athlete, who is 1.91 meters tall and weighs 94 kilograms, was almost certain to be on the roster of 30 athletes that Cuba will field in the upcoming global event of balls and strikes.

The loss is significant and leaves manager Armando Johnson without a player of proven quality. In an exclusive interview with Prensa Latina, Johnson stressed the importance of adding men with experience in foreign competitions.

Among others, Johnson valued as positive the inclusion in the roster of major leaguers Andy Ibáñez (Detroit Tigers), Yoan Moncada and Luis Robert Moirán, the latter from the Chicago White Sox, without forgetting Elián Leyva and Roenis Elías, two starters with outstanding numbers in tournaments in the region.

Due to the tensions generated by the visa procedures to face the preparation and the fair in Japan, Taipei of China and the United States, Cuba will announce its roster on February 24, although the deadline established to submit the list is February 7.

The Caribbean island, runner-up in the founding edition in 2006, was placed in the A key and will face the Netherlands, Italy, Panama and the local Taipei, in that order, at the Taichung Intercontinental Stadium.

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