

Astro Ohtani leads Japan's team to the 5th World Baseball Classic

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Shohei Ohtani

Havana, January 27 (RHC) - Major League Baseball (MLB) star Shohei Ohtani is leading the team of two-time champion Japan to the 5th World Baseball Classic, scheduled for March 8-21 at venues in Japan, Taiwan and the United States.

Hideki Kuriyama, manager of the Japanese national team, officially revealed the 30-man roster on Thursday, although the final roster had already been announced to the Japanese media on January 15.

Japan, aiming to win the title for the third time in its history, will open its campaign against China at the Tokyo Dome on March 9.

Experts consider Japan one of the candidates for the title and estimate that this team is superior to the one presented by Japan in previous editions, in which the big star is Ohtani, 28 years old and who will play his first Classic, since an injury deprived him of playing in 2017.

In 2022, Ohtani was the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the American League. As a pitcher, he had a 15-9 record, with a 2.33 ERA, 219 strikeouts in 166 innings and was a Cy Young Award candidate, while offensively he hit 34 home runs and drove in 96 runs with the Los Angeles Angels.

Another of the stars of the Japanese roster is third baseman Munekata Murakami, who in 2022 broke the home run record for a Japanese player in the Japanese Professional League (NPB) with 56 and drove in 100 runs.

The 30 players that make up its official roster are as follows.

Pitchers (15):

Shohei Otani, Yu Darvish, Shosei Togo, Roki Sasaki, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Ryoji Kuribayashi, Atsuki Yuasa, Taisei Ota, Yuki Udagawa, Hiroto Takahashi, Hiromi Ito, Shota Imanaga, Yuki Matsui, Hiroya Miyagi, Keiji Takahashi.

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