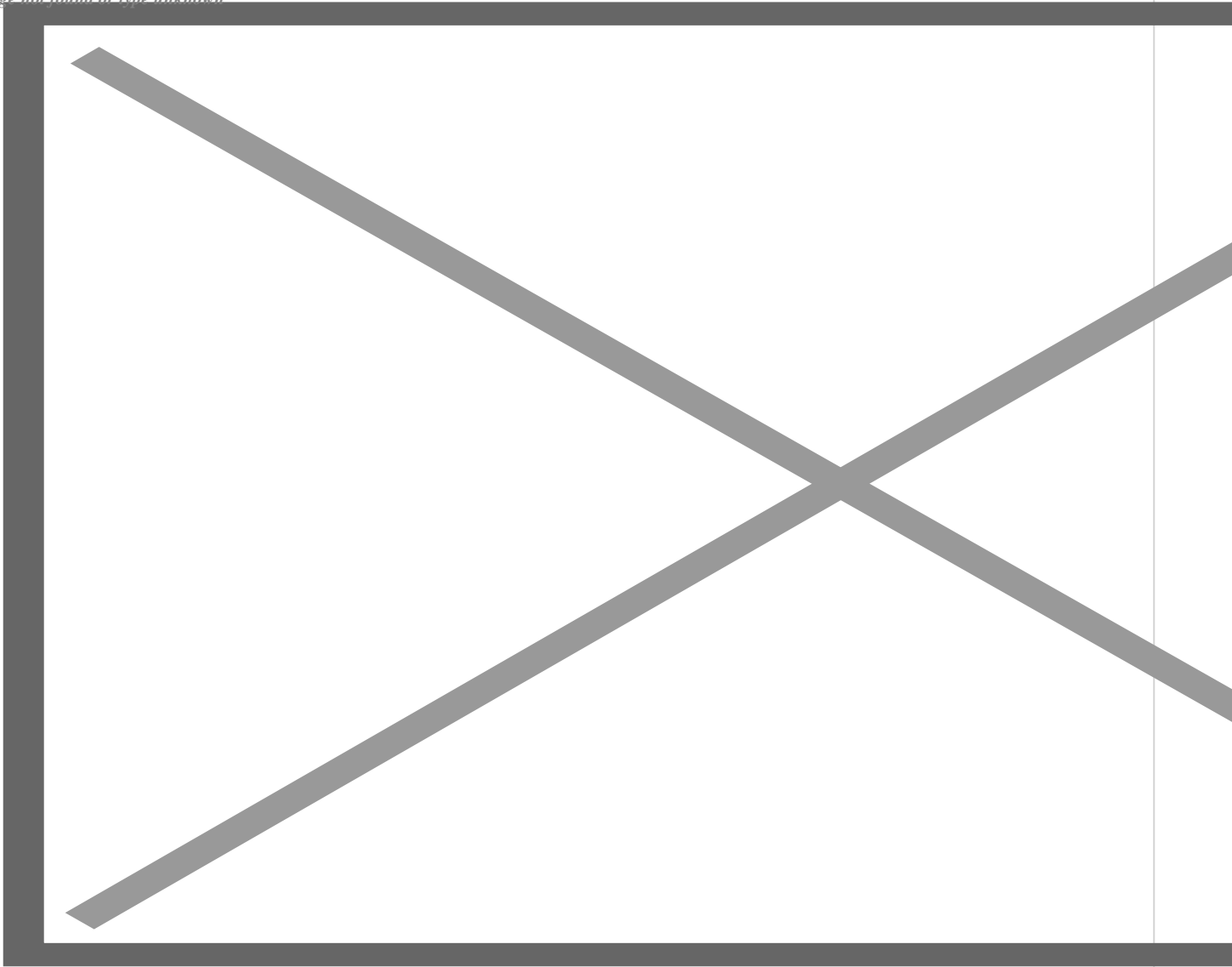


# *Cuba controls statistical zone in World Classics*

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**World Classic 2023**

Taichung, March 6 (PL) - As if it had the recipe to spread the aroma of its baseball and despite the setbacks in recent times, Cuba today has an overwhelming dominance among the individual leaders of the World Classics.

Neither the absence of a title, nor the participation of the discipline's royalty prevent exponents of the Caribbean island from leading some of the most important chapters of the game, after computing the statistics of the four editions organized.

Undoubtedly, the outfielder -still active- Frederich Cepeda becomes a special protagonist, thanks to his reigns in terms of hits (32), runs batted in (23) and runs scored (19), as well as doubles, tied with Canada's Justin Morneau (eight).

Such figures make the ambidextrous Cepeda the most stable hitter in the history of the main competition between nations, hence his fans still regret his non-inclusion in the squad of the largest of the Antilles for the event scheduled for March 8.

The island also achieves relevance with the dominance of Yoenis Céspedes (three) in triples and Alfredo Despaigne (seven) in home runs, both former stars of the U.S. Major League Baseball and Japan's professional circuit, in that order.

At 36, Despaigne, current captain of Team Cuba, will seek to reassert himself at the top of the list, after connecting a home run in 2009, three in 2013 and the same number in 2017. However, he will be opposed by Miguel Cabrera (Venezuela), tied for second place with six, along with Cepeda himself.

Meanwhile, Céspedes, formerly of the Oakland Athletics, Boston Red Sox, Detroit Tigers and New York Mets, will return to the field after an injury plagued 2022-2023 Dominican League season.

All of his three-pad connections came in 2009, and he is followed by Venezuelans Grégor Blanco and Endy Chávez, Akinori Iwamura (Japan), Gift Ngoepe (South Africa) and Jimmy Rollins (United States), with two per capita.

The Cubans are missing traditional offensive statistics such as games played and times at bat, in which another Latin exponent shines with his own light: Puerto Rican Carlos Beltrán (28-95).

In terms of stolen bases, the leadership is shared by three greats: Japan's Tsuyoshi Nishioka, his fellow countryman and future Hall of Famer Ichiro Suzuki, and American Jimmy Rollins, with five.

According to the tournament's official data, all of Nishioka's "swindles" were in 2006 -an absolute record-, while Beltran and Javier Baez (Puerto Rico), Yasuyuki Kataoka (Japan) and Randolph Oduber (Netherlands) compute four.

One name is the main focus in terms of pitching: Daisuke Matsuzaka. The Japanese pitcher tops the charts in terms of starts (six) -tied with Edilson Vólquez of Querétaro-, hits (six) and strikeouts (23).

His fellow countryman Yu Darvish (20), current pitcher of the San Diego Padres, has the opportunity to take the lead, since he will be one of the starters for his country in the upcoming edition. Volquez also has two dozen strikeouts.

Cuba is once again taking the lead in terms of the average of clean runs, as its record still recalls the performance of right-hander Yadel Marti (0.00 in 12.2 innings) in the founding version of the fair, although the effectiveness depends on the innings and the number of games played.

Meanwhile, the experienced Fernando Rodney (Dominican Republic) leads the saves, after his perfect performance in 2013, when he saved seven times. Fernando Cabrera (Puerto Rico) and Francisco Rodríguez (Venezuela) are behind with five each.

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