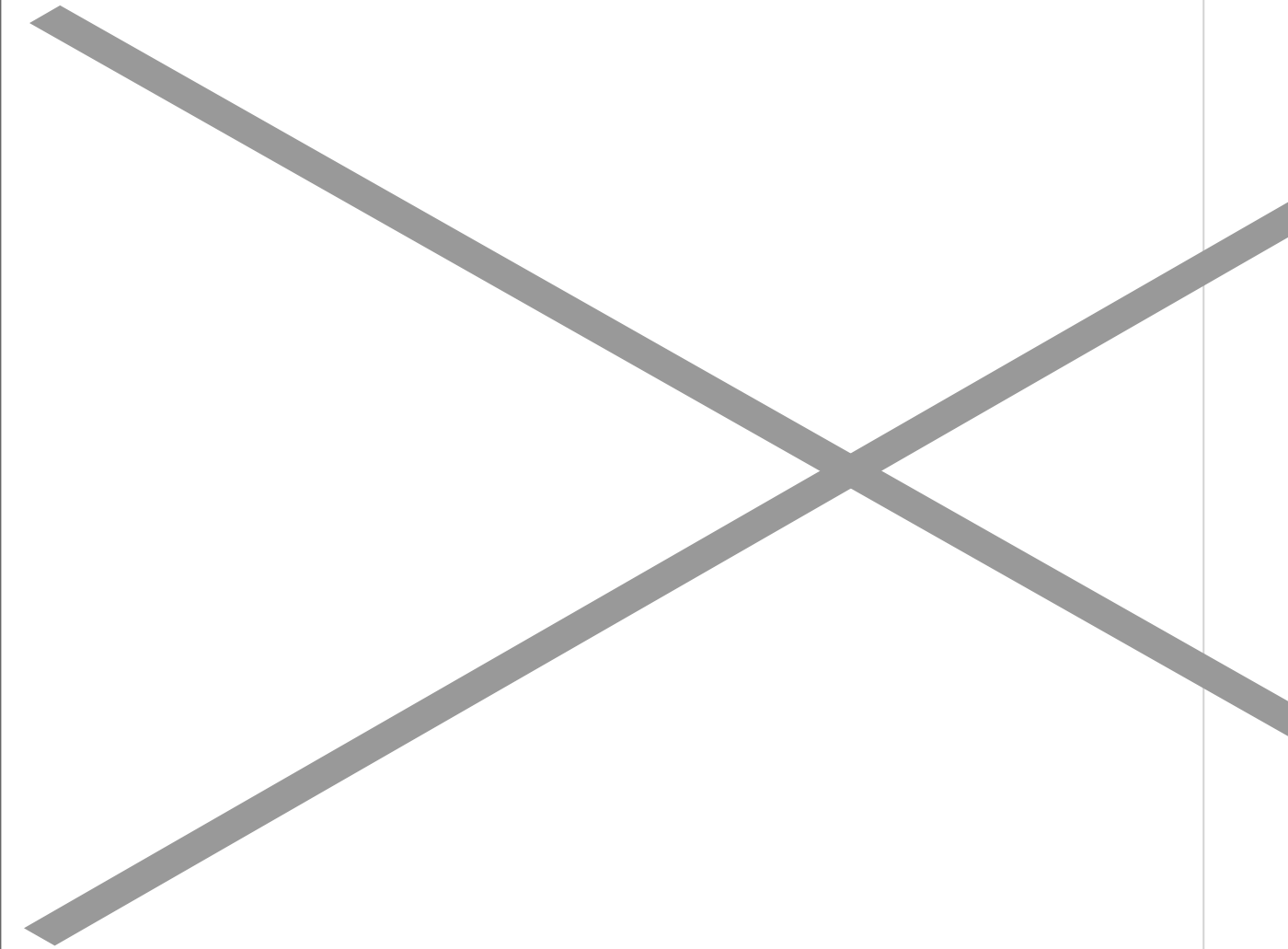


Japan beats Italy and advances to the semifinals of the World Classic

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Japan shakes Italy and advances to the semifinals of the World Classic

Tokyo, March. 16 (PL) - With Shohei Ohtani's monticular performance and an eight-hit attack, Japan disappeared any possibility of surprise and defeated Italy (9-3) today to become the second qualified to the semifinals of the V World Baseball Classic.

he Japanese team, winners in 2006 and 2009, put together a four-run rally in the third chapter, after a ticket to Kensuke Kondoh, a bunt single by Ohtani, a base on balls to Munetaka Murakami and a home run by Kazuma Okamoto, the best hitter of the game.

Okamoto (5CI, 3CA, 1HR, 1-2B) stole the spotlight again in the fifth episode, when he hit a two-run homer, although Ohtani and Masataka Yoshida did their job again, both of whom got into circulation due to the lack of control of the opposing pitching.

In order to close the game, manager Hideki Kuriyama used Yu Darvish (San Diego Padres) in the role of reliever for a couple of innings, to reach an instance that has Cuba as its only guest so far.

In the midst of the chants in a packed Tokyo Dome, the Samurai made 41,723 souls present happy and returned to the charge in the seventh act, stepping on home plate two more times to take the decisive advantage.

Ohtani (2-0), who worked 4.2 innings, allowed two runs and four hits, in addition to striking out five and giving a free pass to the first pad, finished the victory.

Thus, Italy, led by former Cooperstown Hall of Fame catcher Mike Piazza, said goodbye to its journey in the WBC 2023, with the satisfaction of crossing the round for the first time in its history, as well as defeating its arch-rival Netherlands in the closing game of Group A.

Japan, meanwhile, will now travel to Miami, United States, where the epilogue of the tournament will be held. Their opponent will come out of the Mexico-Puerto Rico matchup, teams that advanced as first and second in segments C and D, respectively.

After the elimination of the Dominican Republic, experts and fans point out that the Asian and American teams are the best candidates to win the trophy on March 21.

However, Venezuela (or "Team Arepa Power") showed a solid performance in the initial phase and many believe that Cuba could spring a big surprise in the most important baseball competition between countries.

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