

# *Cuba's Little League team and a good look at the future*

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Havana, August 20 (JIT) -- Cuba's Bayamo team said goodbye today to the Little League Baseball World Series (LLWBS), in Williamsport, United States, leaving a good taste for the future of the national sport.

The Bayamese -who always played with arms, legs and heart- fell 2-3 against Santiago de Veraguas, from Panama, at the Pennsylvania Volunteers Stadium after having defeated the previous day in a convincing 11-1 knockout to the Australian team.

Yesterday's win was the first victory by a team from the island in the history of the LLWBS.

In the first outing, on August 16, they had a setback against the Musashi Fuchu of Tokyo, Japan, in a game that, by the way, showed that our boys were a retaining wall for the Japanese pitching staff.

The Cuban players only allowed one hit and the only run of the game, which lasted six innings.

Now, although the competition for our players ends here, it cannot be qualified with a lesser note than an excellent performance: for them everything, or almost everything, was for the first time, and they beat as the most consecrated.

The public rewarded them with their respect and also with ovations. The Lone Star flag waved in a series that in its almost eight decades of life never had a team from the largest of the Antilles on the roster.

As an observer of the games, of the shouts of 'Cuba, Cuba' as a sign of support and also of the hugs given by the parents of the children of the Japan squads in that match on the 16th, I think of how much better everything would be without the U.S. blockade of the island.

Our children will have to wait for the embrace of their parents when they return home and I think how beautiful it would be for the next edition of this World Series if the families of the Cubans could come and shout and get excited as others do here.

The challenge against Panama ended with palms to the account of pitcher Omar Vargas, who was on the mound for four innings and two thirds, and Allan Rodriguez, while for the Bayamese Ismael Ortega took the setback.

The (logical) analysis will be made, but there is no doubt that the balance will always be in favor.

Participation in this 2023 event makes Cuba the 29th country to earn a place in the LLBWS and once again qualify for direct entry in 2024 as part of the international rotation.

Quality and preparation characterize the 20 teams participating in the competition, 10 from the United States and a similar number of international teams, Roberto González, methodologist of the Cuban Baseball Federation, told Prensa Latina.

Precisely yesterday, U.S. sports authorities and the Cuban Baseball and Softball Federation signed here an agreement that ratifies the commitment with the development of Little League in Cuba.

The affiliation extension agreement until 2025 was signed by Stephen D. Keener, president and CEO of Little League, and Juan Reinaldo Pérez, president of the Cuban Baseball and Softball Federation.

"In the four years since we signed our initial agreement with the Cuban Baseball and Softball Federation, we have been continually impressed and inspired by Cuba's commitment," Keener said.

"We are pleased to be able to extend our agreement and look forward to an exciting future as we continue to grow the game throughout the country and work to motivate and inspire thousands of children each year," he said.

That's what it's all about.



**Radio Habana Cuba**