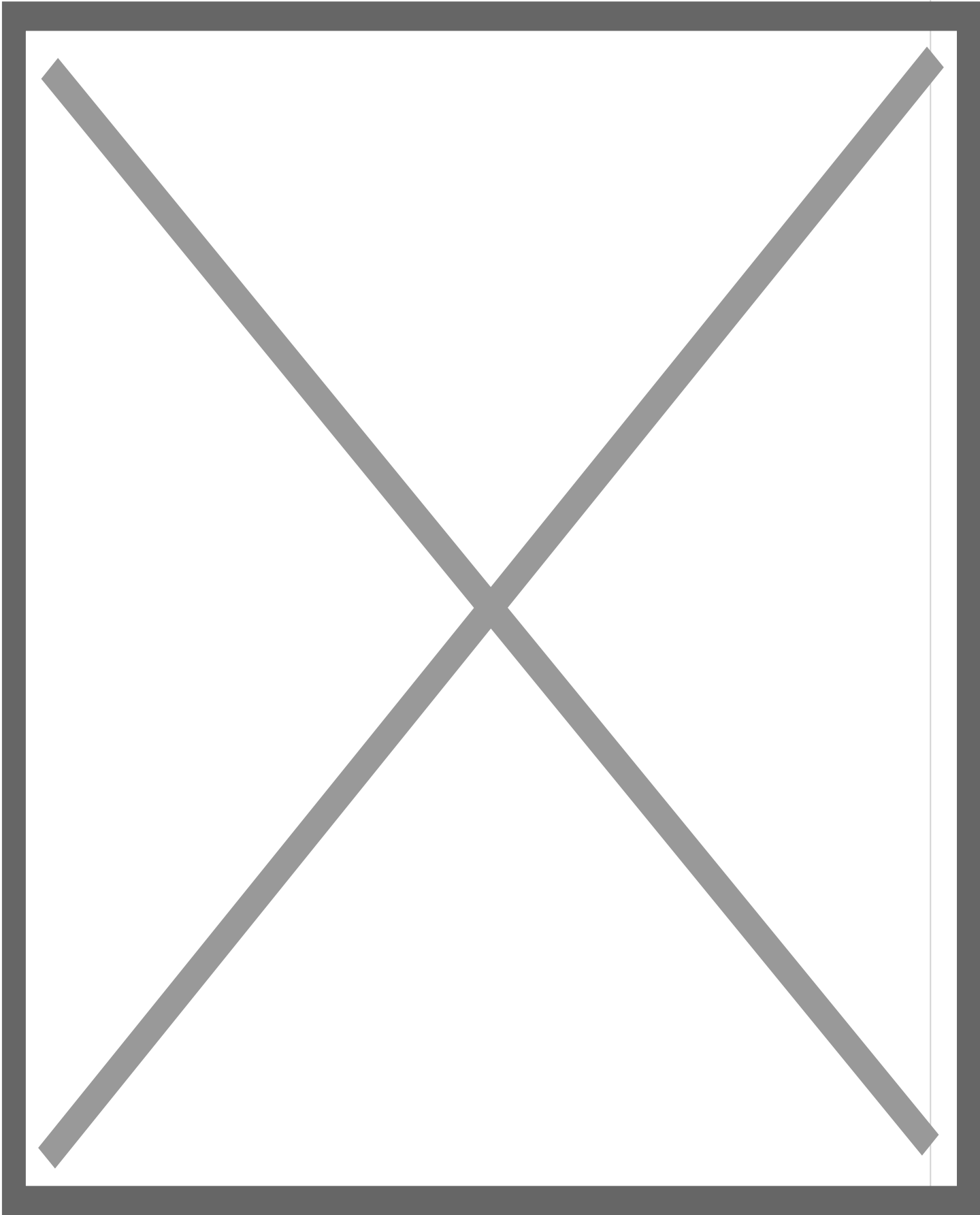


El reparador de sueños (The dream repairman)

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By Orlando González Cruz

Havana, September 30 (RHC)- José Manuel Cortina is the architect of the triumphs of countless pitchers in Cuba and abroad.

His wisdom and simplicity arouse the affection and admiration of baseball players and fans alike.

The veteran pitching coach kindly agreed to talk to Radio Habana Cuba about some passages of his professional life:

What is Professor Cortina's first memory linked to baseball?

I was born with the Majagua bats drying on the tin roof of my house from one year to the next. My dad was a player and manager of my town's baseball team.

Did you play baseball officially?

Sure, I was a pitcher until I was 16 years old and I switched to first base because I hurt my arm. I played two national series with Vegueros.

Today you are one of the main pitching coaches in Cuba. Where do you consider your success lies?

Well, I don't know if I am one of the main coaches in Cuba, but I can assure you that I am the oldest.

It's hard for me to say the word success, but I do my job with a lot of love.

There are pitching coaches with high percentages of injuries in their students. You, on the other hand, are an arm repairman. Where do you see the main differences?

Pantoja, the director of Las Tunas, every time he passes by me he calls me "the dream repairman". That name was given to me by Robertico, a boy from Camagüey, a good painter, and he made a caricature of me with a chisel in my hand repairing a pitcher's elbow, when I was helping José Ramón, he called me "the dream repairer".

Everything is with the love that you do it, to a friend I answered one day:

From a sack of rice two cooks take rice, they cook it and they both get different results. There is something very particular, the way you do it.

What is the greatest professional satisfaction that José Manuel Cortina feels?

That they come back to the mound again and many of them call me father.

Tell us a little about your experience with the stellar Mariano Rivera.

I worked with him in Panama, he was a shortstop and I motivated him to learn how to pitch. The greatest thing in this story is Mariano; his greatness, his incredible heart, his sensitivity, his altruism, his humility. Remembering me is something that not all men have. To thank his first coach... If Mariano was great on the mound, he is even greater with the sincerity with which he manages his life towards others. From here I thank him again for that beautiful memory to my humble person.

What place does Pinar del Río have in Cortina's heart?

Well, I would say that my mining land, my province, my homeland has a place in my heart. It is in my soul, I love my homeland and I feel proud of it.

What is it about the westernmost Cuban province that generates so many quality pitchers?

The legacy of work left by the father of Pinar del Río pitching, José Joaquín Pando.

Which of his disciples have impressed you the most and why?

All of them, because apart from being excellent pitchers they were magnificent boys. To name them all, with different characteristics, would be a very long list. Remember that fifty years of work are not few.

How would you like future generations to remember you?

I would like them to remember that I was loyal to them, that I spoke to them with the truth, and when I had to scold them I did it with respect and affection, there is a phrase in Contreras' networks where he says "Cortina gave me a great lesson in discipline".

Today I thank José Ariel Contreras for his nice opinion and from here I send him a hug.

Thanking one of his most distinguished students, Cortina ended this interview.

The baseball gods offered him a gift and this pedagogue of the mound will continue training pitchers, recovering arms and dreams for many years to come.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/deportes/335493-el-reparador-de-suenos-the-dream-repairman>



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