

Santiago 2023: Cuban mentor presents lineup for baseball debut

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Havana October 20 (ACN)-- Armando Johnson, technical director of the Cuban baseball team, announced the possible lineup of his team for its debut this Friday in the Santiago 2023 Pan American Games.

On the same day that the continental multisport event will be officially inaugurated, the Cuban team will make its debut against Colombia, before facing Venezuela on Sunday 22 and closing the qualifying phase against Brazil on Tuesday 24.

For the opening game, Johnson should place Roel Santos as the first bat, followed by Roberto Baldoquin, Yoelquis Guibert, Erisbel Arruebarruena in the fourth at bat, Dayán García, Yurisbel Gracial, Yasniel González, Andrys Pérez and Yadir Mujica.

The mentor assured the press that this line up is almost the same that he used against Curacao in the final of the Caribbean Cup hosted by San Juan, Puerto Rico, until last October 8, with the only exception of the entry of Guibert, who is under contract in the Mexican League.

He added that the starting pitcher against the Colombians will be left-handed Yoanni Yera and all the pitchers will be ready to relieve, with Fran Abel Álvarez as closer.

For the next two games, Carlos Juan Viera will pitch against the Venezuelans and José Ramón Rodríguez against the Brazilians.

In the case of Rodríguez, he told the Cuban News Agency that it has been several years (since 2007) since Cuba won the gold medal and the expectation of all of us is to achieve that goal, although we know it will not be an easy task, he said.

He added that the team is very focused and arrives to this event very motivated after winning the crown in the recent V Caribbean Baseball Cup.

Regarding his individual condition, he said that he has prepared hard as always and hopes that the work will come out to help the cause of the national team.

Rodríguez explained that the idea will be to go step by step, first classify among the top four and then discuss the medals, and if it is the gold much better, he concluded.

In Lima 2019 the ballplayers of the Caribbean nation had their worst performance in Pan American Games by placing sixth, in a tournament won by Puerto Rico, absent now because it did not qualify.

Cuba reigned consecutively in continental baseball from 1971 to 2007 with 10 titles, and had previously triumphed in the 1951 and 1963 editions.

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