

Cuban Star Frederick Cepeda To Play In Japan



Havana, April 19, (RHC), -- The Yomiuri Giants of Nippon Professional Baseball announced that it has a deal with Cuban outfielder Frederick Cepeda, a longtime star on the Cuban national team who will join the Giants next month. According to the Associated Press, Cepeda has a one-year, \$1.5 million contract.

Cepeda, who turned 34 earlier this month, hit .292/.484/.536 in 274 at-bats during the 2013-14 season in Cuba, which he split between Sancti Spiritus and Artemisa. Cepeda led Serie Nacional in OBP and walks (100), while ranking third in home runs (13) and fourth in slugging.

At 5-foot-10, 215 pounds, Cepeda has outstanding strike-zone discipline and a simple, sound swing from both sides of the plate. Cepeda was in Japan last year for the World Baseball Classic, where he ranked as WBC's No. 9 prospect, and has been a staple on the Cuban national team for more than a decade, including the 2004 Olympics. Cepeda is a limited defender, so he's restricted to a corner outfield spot or DH.

Cuban players can participate in foreign leagues during the summer (the offseason for Cuba) and return to Cuba afterwards to play in Serie Nacional. Fellow Cuban star outfielder Alfredo Despaigne is expected to return to the Mexican League to play for the Campeche Pirates after joining the team late last season.



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