

Cuba loses and says adios to Olympic baseball dream



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Port St. Lucie, June 2 (RHC)-- The dream of living the Tokyo 2020 baseball became a nightmare for Cuba, losing by a score of 5 to 6 to Canada in a game that erased any possibility of qualifying to the Super Round of the pre-Olympic of America.

Monarch under the flag of the five rings in Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996 and Athens 2004, the Caribbean island will be the great absentee in the tournament of balls and strikes of the Japanese capital, after adding its second setback in Group B of the qualifying round that is organized in parallel in Port St. Lucie and in the city of West Palm Beach.

The Canadians punished starter Carlos Juan Viera (0.2, 3C, 4H, 1BB) early, with a rocket by lead-off man Wesley Darvill, a double by Eric Wood and other singles by Connor Panas and Kellin Deglan to round off an early three-run cluster.

Without much patience and aware of the importance of stopping the rebellion, Cuba's manager Armando Ferrer took right-hander Viera out of the box and put all his faith in prospect Yariel Rodriguez, who struck out J. D. Osborne to seal the fateful first inning.

Rodriguez (6.1, 2C, 4H, 4BB, 11K), 24 years old and a player of the Chunichi Dragons in the Japanese League, had an uncomfortable second inning, as he got three outs on tickets, but managed to contain the blood before reaching the river after sticking his arm in and drawing a zero with three strikeouts.

Despite displaying straight lines of up to 98 miles per hour and retiring 11 opponents on strikes, the right-handed flamethrower endured two more scores and left the mound after six and a third innings of work against Canadians who had nine hits in the game.

Cuba threatened in innings three and four, but it was all just a feint, as the connection never came at the right time, and it was not until the fifth episode that the offense managed to open its run box.

To add drama to the script in the bottom of the ninth, Ferrer's team hit uninterrupted runs by Raico Santos and Roel Santos, the emerging Frederich Cepeda drove in the fourth run with a sacrifice fly, Yordanis Samón reached on an error and drove in one more; however, the closer John Axford struck out the batter Lisbán Correa.

The hit ended in the biography of reliever Dustin Molleken (1-0, 2.1, 1C, 2H, 1K), the setback in Viera's personal account (0-1) and the point for game saved in Axford's own resume (one, 0.1, 1K).

Thus, the still undefeated Canada (2-0) and Venezuela (2-0) will be the representatives of the B key in the next segment of the competition, while Cuba (0-2) and Colombia (0-2), Wednesday's opponents, were left out of the fight for the ticket to the Olympic Games in Japan.

In Group A, the United States defeated the Dominican Republic by a score of 8 to 6 and remained undefeated in two games, while Nicaragua defeated Puerto Rico 7 to 6 and is still in contention with a 1-1 record.

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