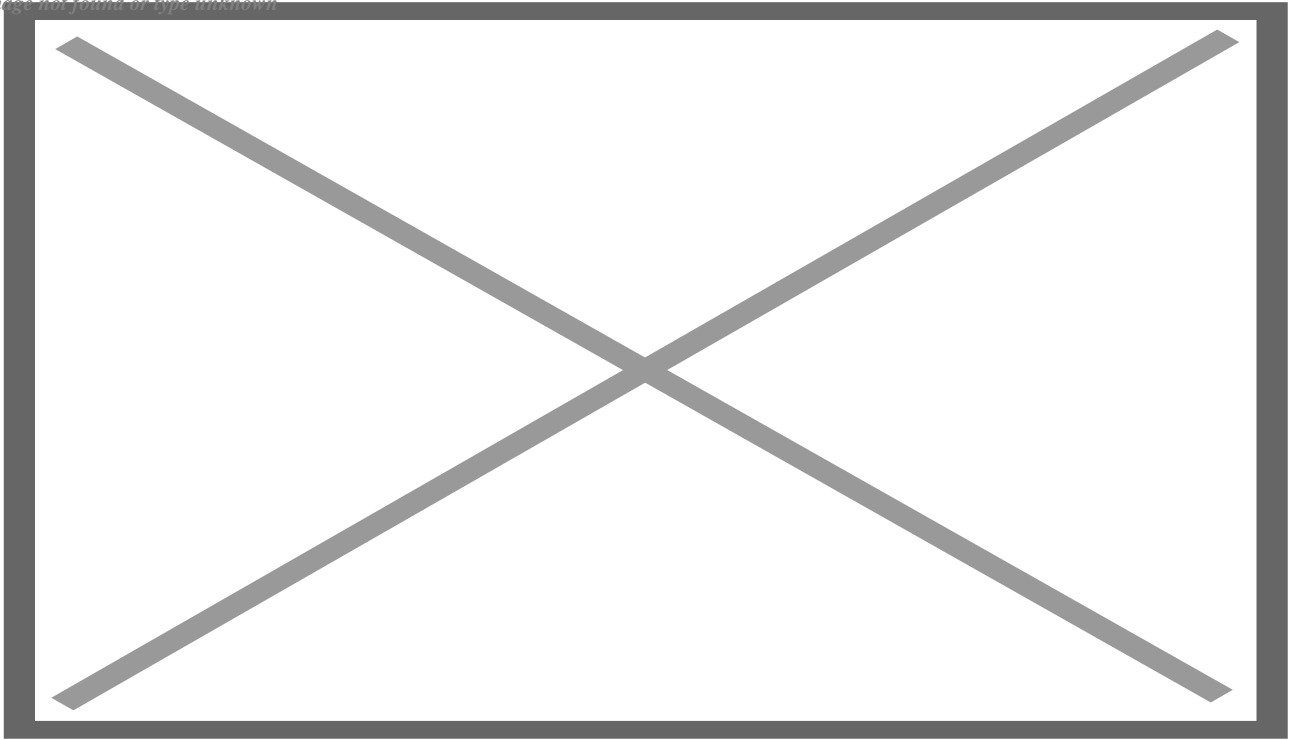


# *Silver and a ticket to the World Cup for Cuba in the U-23 Pan American Baseball Championship*

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## **U-23 Pan American Baseball Championship**

Havana, June 20 (JIT) - Defensive errors and poor batting marked Cuba's performance in the final game of the U-23 Pan American Baseball Championship 2022, held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, and won by the host team as undefeated.

There was no conformism with the World Cup qualification and the security of the silver medals, but the actions broke difficult and some defensive errors tipped the balance towards a local team formed by "road" athletes in the professional leagues of this country.

In front of a pleasant crowd at the Romo Chavez main stadium, the Aztec team won 4x0, supported by a notable performance by right-hander Jordan Suarez, who tolerated only two hits and gave up one ticket and one hit in 5.1 innings of work.

Suarez was pitching a zero-hit, zero-run game when in the bottom of the sixth inning, Cuban left-handers Yoendri Guibert and Dany Oramas were able to hit him into the no-man's zone.

The remaining unbatable runs for the Caribbeans came in the final act, from the bats of Yuri Fernandez and Andrys Perez, with two outs on the board and just before the play that decreed the end of the game.

The Aztecs scored one in the second inning, two in the third and the last one in the sixth, with an offensive output of eight hits, including two runs.

In the opening of the second act, Víctor Ruiz hit a double, Carlos Pacheco struck out and Cristopher Escarrega hit a ground ball for the Cuban starter Javier Carabeo, who made a bad throw to the pitcher and the ball escaped, allowing the score that broke the cellophane of the home plate.

In the following inning Elmer Lopez received a transfer and Javier Sanchez sacrificed to advance him, on a bunt to the pitcher who chose to throw to second base and did not get anyone out. Then the team's third hitter, Jose Zepeda, also sacrificed a bunt and advanced his teammates to the pads at the corners of the diamond.

With one out on the board, the Cuban command decided to hit Víctor Ruiz and fill the bases, before a run-scoring hit to right field on Carlos Pacheco's count.

The next score came on an infield hit by Escarrega, a bad intentions run that was deflected by Cuban starting pitcher Oscar Hernandez, a left-handed pitcher from Villaclare (2.1 ENT, 3H, 3C, 2BB, 3K) who had little luck in this outing.

The hosts would not score again until the sixth inning, when Angel Camacho singled, stole the second pad, went to the anteroom with a ground ball through the box and scored brought in by Sanchez's single to the right field.

Armando Johnson appealed to the bullpen to keep the game closed and did so through the work of Randy Cueto (2.1 ENT, 2H) and Marlon Vega (1.1 ENT, 1H, 1K). However, left-handers Alex Guerra and Naykel Cruz could not avoid the run that would serve as a classic puntilla. The victory, of course, went to Suarez and the loss to Hernandez.

The bronze medals went to the chests of the Nicaraguans, winners in a close victory over the Venezuelans with a 4x3 slate.

Among the best players of the event, two Cubans stood out, Javier Carabeo (leader in home runs with three) and the best center fielder, Francisco Venecia, who, by the way, left the final game due to a thigh injury.

Johnson, in statements to JIT, highlighted the general work of his boys and acknowledged that in the final game they failed in defense and batting, fundamentally.

Marcos Rodríguez, Cuba's ambassador to Mexico, highlighted the work of the young athletes, the hospitality of the organizers and the good atmosphere generated for the event. He considered that the qualification of Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela for the world championship in October in Taiwan expresses the strength of Latin America in this sport.

Finally, Andrys Perez - captain of the Cuban team - expressed his satisfaction for what was achieved here and expressed his confidence in a great performance during the universal competition at the end of the year.

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