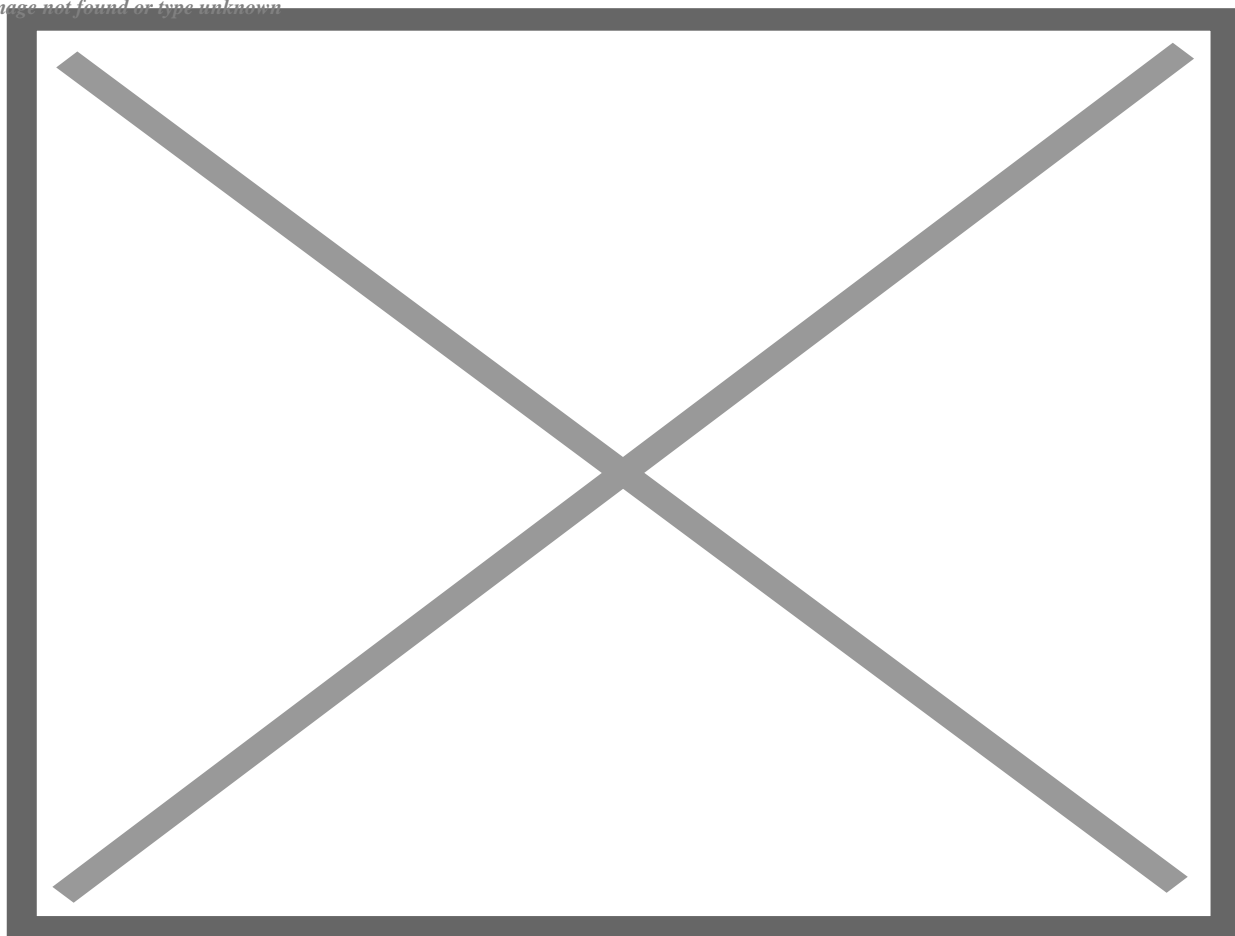


# *Panama blanks Italy and breathes a sigh of relief at the World Baseball Classic*

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**Photo: Prensa Latina**

Havana, March 11 (RHC)-- With a masterful performance by its pitchers, Panama blanked Italy 2-0 to keep its chances of qualifying and increase the attractiveness of the A key of the 5th World Baseball Classic to the maximum.

With no margin for error in a "life or death" duel, the Canal pitching was up to the task and faced the lumber of a European offense that had performed well in its two previous presentations on the grass of the Intercontinental Stadium of Taichung.

Confident, calm and focused, the winner Harold Araúz (1-0, 4.0, 0C, 2H, 1BB, 3K) starred in a high-class performance, after working four innings with no runs, just two hits, one walk and three strikeouts.

Araúz left the game on track and manager Luis Ortiz's bullpen also shined from the mound, thanks to the work of relievers Humberto Mejía (2.0, 0C, 1H, 1BB, 1K), Alberto Baldonado (2.0, 0C, 1H, 1K) and savior Javy Guerra (1JS, 1.0, 0C, 1H, 1K, 1BB), whose straight line exceeded 100 miles per hour (mph).

Madero in hand were Erasmo Caballero (2-1, 1BB), Allen Córdoba (3-1, 1CI) and José Ramos (4-2, 1CI, 2CA, 1HR), author of the only home run of the duel, which traveled 428 feet and had an exit velocity of 107.9 mph.

The palms, also, for the mentor Ortiz, who exquisitely managed each of his pieces and ensured to extend his chances of advancing to the quarterfinals in Tokyo, Japan, although it will depend on the remaining results, as he has already completed the competitive schedule.

In a press conference, Ortiz highlighted the team's reaction after yesterday's 4-13 drubbing against Cuba and called to keep their hopes alive while the rest of the teams complete their schedule.

The Isthmian team had seven hits and made no errors, while the Italians had five hits and no errors with their gloves, in a clash with excellent pitching.

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