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**Cuban National Team at Can-Am League: Of setbacks and other demons**

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It could look like a remake of the Cuban team's performance in the last season of the Can-Am Independent Baseball League, judging by the performance shown so far.

Let's recall that the players commanded by Roger Machado managed to achieve an adverse 3-7 balance, before ending with 11-9, barely above the .500 mark.

Well, after impeccably starting with 3 wins, the Cuban squad has collapsed in its performance and achieved 4 setbacks in a row vs. the Quebec Capitales, sign that the pitching, mainly the opening staff, is not well.

Without being pessimistic, we made an objective analysis, taking into account several statistics, before our team finished its subseries vs. the Capitales, which, by the way, ranks second in the tournament, with a 17-8 balance. The Rockland Boulders (19-7) are reigning, while the tricolor team is in fourth position, behind the New Jersey Jackals (15-10), and the team representing the Dominican Republic had been unable to win in five games.

\* At bats \*

Let's start with the offensive, a logical matter, since ball games are won with runs. If we judged by general indicators such as batting average (.313, with 84 hits in 268 times at bat), runs scored and RBI (35-31), extra bases (14 doubles and 3 home runs), plus 13 walks allowed and 47 strikeouts. The team is not on the wrong course, except for the excessive number of struckout players in seven games. Add to this a poor .399 slugging and a .350 base percentage. These last two figures, at first glance, show that the insular squad does not have men of high and recognized offensive caliber, nor have they properly exploited speed on the basis of the offensive, because its base percentage exhibits only 2 base steals in an equal number of attempts.

We can also add they left 29 men on base in their 4 losses, an issue reflecting that once again the hitters have

been dominated in tension situations with runners on base, even with several runs behind in the score.

Individually, Juan Carlos Torriente (.393 (28-11), 5 RBI), Yosvany Alarcón (.375 (16-6), 3 doubles and 4 RBI), Yordanis Samón (.355 (31-11) with 4 RBI), and Guillermo Avilés (.345 (29-10) with 2 doubles, 1 home run and 5 RBI) have been the best hitters.

\*The suffering on the hill...\*

The pitching staff allowing an ERA of 6.20, opponents hitting .303 BA, and the WHIP 1.79, plus 10 HRs allowed, left no room for hope.

The cornerstone of Cuban losses is the starting pitching. Vladimir Banos, Yoannis Yera, Dachel Duquesne, and Ulfrido Garcia have not been able to get the job done. Mid relievers and closers have not performed any better.

The stats show it: 61 innings, 71 hits allowed, 48 earned runs allowed. The K-BB ratio is 32-58. More than 4 walks per game in too much.

Some Cuban players were among the top in the offensive department. Torriente is second in BA (.393). Yordan Manduley tops the list with (.415). He plays for the Capitals. RHP Jose Ramon Rodriguez ranks 4th among pitchers with a very good ERA 2.46. The leader is Granma's Lazaro Blanco, playing now for the Quebec Capitals with ERA 2.25.

We have still 14 games ahead. It is a very tough schedule. We trust Cuba can recover and get used to the pace of the Can Am League. We hope our team can meet the goal of finishing the competition above the .500 mark.

Translated by Jorge Mesa Benjamin / Cubasi Translation Staff

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