
Until 2023! World Baseball Classic vanishes

By: Lorenzo Almaraz
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As a consequence of the stoppage of the seasons in the United States and Japan and the postponement of the Olympic Games by one year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the fifth edition of the World Baseball Classic was canceled, a couple of sources close to the organizers told ESPN Digital.

“The tournament was canceled. Not the priority now himself,” said a source. “Basically the only thing missing is an ad official,” said the other.

The World Classic, the only nations event in which The players of the American major leagues participate, I was scheduled to take place March 9-23, 2021 in three countries; United States, Japan, and Taiwan. The previous four versions were made in 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2017.

The event is organized by World Baseball Classic Inc. – entity

Composed of the World Baseball and Softball Confederation (WBSC), for its The Major League Baseball Commissioner's Office (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) – in conjunction with professional leagues in Japan (NPB) and South Coreal (KBO).

Because the tournament is part of the current Collective Labor Agreement (CBA) between MLB and its players union, which expires in December 2021, reschedule the tournament must be negotiated. The organizers do not believe that the World Classic can be played again before 2023.

“The WBSC sanctioned World Classic is jointly organized by the MLB and the MLB Players Association, with who are in constant contact, “WBSC said in a statement sent to ESPN Digital.

“Together with the MLB, we periodically review the status and any possible changes in the tournament in general, and also, currently, due to the security measures implemented regarding the pandemic of coronavirus, “reads the statement.

In February it was announced that the fifth World Classic would would play at Taichung Intercontinental Baseball Stadium in Taichung, Taiwan; the Tokyo Dome in Tokyo, Japan, as well as at Chase Field in Arizona Diamondbacks in Phoenix, Arizona, and the Miami Marlins' Marlins Park in Miami, Florida.

For the first time the list of competitors was increased to 20 and a stadium, Marlins Park, was declared the venue for three rounds in the same event. Miami was assigned Group D first round, quarterfinals, semifinals and the grand final.

The 16 countries that participated in 2017 were invited automatic (Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Taiwan, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Mexico, Puerto Rico, United States and Venezuela), while the other four would come out of two qualifying tournaments.

Brazil, France, Nicaragua, Pakistan, South Africa, Philippines, Great Britain, New Zealand, Panama, and the Czech Republic were scheduled to participate in two “preclassic” tournaments from March

12-25 in Tucson, Arizona, but those competitions were canceled by the coronavirus, which also suspended America's tie for baseball at the Tokyo Olympics, when the MLB closed its training grounds on March 12.

To further confuse the situation, three weeks later were postponed to next year, the Olympic Games that should have been held this summer in the Japanese capital.

Entering the third week of May, neither the MLB nor the NPB they have specific dates to start their seasons.

Since the idea of the World Classic began to hatch, the organizers chose to schedule it in a year that did not coincide with other major events, such as the Olympics or the Soccer World Cup.

Although the first one had to be played in 2006 (coinciding with the World Cup from Germany), the second was advanced to 2009, to later begin the normal four-year cycle between events.

The NPB, who has never been a fan of playing the Classic World Cup in March, suggested in April that the rescheduling of the Games Olympics, which will force her to advance her season, would question the Japan's participation in the great global ball championship.

“Thinking about our calendar for next year, there are things I want to talk about soon and meet with the organizers,” said Atsushi Ihara, secretary general of the Japanese league.
