

---

OPINION: The Fiasco of the Copa América

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros

12/11/2025



I truly cannot recall any international tournament being canceled due to a lack of budget less than a week before it was set to begin.

You read that correctly—I said none. Not even the less prominent events come to mind. There have been last-minute cancellations, certainly, but when they occur outside of force majeure situations—natural disasters or pandemics—they are usually caused by a boycott from a participating team or even the fans, as happened in the last Vuelta a España. But financial problems? That simply does not happen.

And it should not happen, because there is an Organizing Committee that months in advance must seriously assess the feasibility of the event. Above all, there should be an international governing body monitoring the preparations to intervene if necessary.

This was a key factor in the suspension of the first Copa América of baseball—a competition that was already troubled when one of its original hosts, Venezuela, stepped down due to logistical issues. Although discussions now frame it as a postponement rather than a cancellation, all signs indicate it will not take place.

The majority of the responsibility lies with the Panamanian organizers and the Baseball Confederation of the Americas, but the international body cannot wash its hands of the matter. It would be like the 2026 FIFA World Cup being canceled and FIFA claiming the responsibility falls solely on CONCACAF. That simply cannot be the case.

As a global entity, periodic checks on preparations are essential to ensure deadlines are being met. In this instance, everything points to a total abandonment of that responsibility. If the WBSC had done its job properly, it could have at least threatened to withdraw the hosting rights from Panama.

Unfortunately, the prestige of this organization is at an all-time low. It repeatedly fails in its attempts to reinstate baseball in the Olympic Games and remains largely a ceremonial presence in the sport's premier tournament, the World Baseball Classic.

In this case, the mismanagement also undermines the work of technical staff from the participating countries and, most importantly, the players themselves, many of whom are currently inactive as the major leagues have just concluded.

Those ready for the competition intensified their training; some even left their winter league teams to join the national squad—and it was all for nothing because the Copa evaporated, a victim of improvisation.

This was not just any tournament—it was supposed to grant qualification spots for the upcoming Central American and Pan American Games. Yet feasibility studies are non-negotiable; if no one sees it as profitable, it simply will not happen. Today, nearly every sporting event is measured against the investment-return equation, and organizing such events is far from simple.

However, the gravest error in this case lies with those responsible for ensuring everything was in order, who instead left it all to divine providence—which, as the saying goes, only helps those who rise early.

---