
US Pitcher Eyes Historic Contract With Cuba's Industriales

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US Matthew McLaughlin seeks to become a professional pitcher in the Cuban National Series.

He wants to be the first U.S. player in nearly six decades to participate in the Cuban National Series. The 24-year-old, 6-foot-1-inch pitcher hopes to become a professional with the Havana's Industriales, which is an emblematic baseball team and a cradle of talented players.

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McLaughlin dreamed of playing for the Boston Red Sox as a child. However, once he moved to Havana to study Spanish in 2014, his goals took a surprising turn.

"When I came down to Cuba I realized that my dream was never to play for the Boston Red Sox. It was to pitch for the Industriales," McLaughlin explained, and proudly said that he is the first U.S. citizen "to play a Cuba's provincial series in the last 60 years."

The pitcher's dream could be fulfilled because he is already participating in the Provincial Series of Havana since Jan. 15.

"Matthew is here like another Cuban," former pitcher Lazaro de la Torre said and added that he took McLaughlin into account "for his effort, interest and dedication to baseball, a chemistry he has achieved with Cubans every morning when training starts."

"Matthew McLaughlin is linked to baseball in Cuba, and seeks to be the first U.S. citizen to play a National Series."

De la Torre, who was the Industriales team manager in the last national series, also commented that McLaughlin will have "the door open for Industriales" if he achieves a good performance in the provincial series.

McLaughlin revealed that he has learned "a lot" by playing in Cuba and expressed emotion for the ["United States Major League Baseball \(MLB\)-Cuban Baseball Federation \(CBF\) agreement,"](#) which would allow Cuban players to sign professional contracts with any U.S. team without having to defect from their country.

"MLB and the Cuban Baseball Federation have signed an agreement that will allow Cuban baseball players to sign with major league clubs. After playing (and continuing to play) baseball in Havana for the past couple of years, I have always been struck by how baseball has the power to build bridges between our two countries, and that our shared passion for "The Ball" always should, and in the end, will transcend politics," McLaughlin expressed through Facebook.
