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## Can Danny Miranda Take On the Classic?

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi

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Several fans have asked me this question in the last few hours, and it's a difficult one, because Danny Miranda just won the Third Elite League of Cuban baseball with Ciego de Ávila, and some already see him as the mentor of Team Cuba for the upcoming World Baseball Classic.

Certainly, the rookie showed some very good qualities, first qualifying for the League, and then creating a Frankenstein when several players from his hometown decided not to play.

Results come and go, but the ability of a person to lead and motivate a good group of players who aren't even from his province, in my opinion, is even more commendable.

It was a real hot potato for the former first baseman, because even fans could have turned their backs on him due to the lack of local representatives. But none of that intimidated him, and from the moment he selected reinforcements, he shaped something that seemed completely unreal.

He was fortunate enough to keep his entire squad intact in the midst of a tournament in which the rest of the teams suffered losses throughout the season, but, regardless of chance, from the moment he sat down on the diamond of Latinoamericano Stadium to make his draw, he knew exactly what he wanted, unlike other coaching staffs who continue to go to those crucial moments to improvise, as if they were playing cards in their living rooms.

The seriousness with which he approached that evening, and the one he kept throughout the tournament in trying to get to know each of the men he had under his command for the first time, are another point in the Ciego de Ávila native's favor.

Also highly commendable is his study of the opponents and the confidence to manage his pitching staff with a firm hand, unafraid to take anyone out of the box, no matter their name, if he deems it not the best option for that particular moment.

Now, we're talking about the World Baseball Classic, the most important event in baseball worldwide, and there's no learning curve there.

It's a different story, as the saying goes, although Danny also has a soft touch for embracing players he doesn't know and getting the most out of them, which can also be very valuable in building a line-up. The Classic, because half of the potential members of that line-up don't play in Cuba.

The Classic is still a long way off, although the rest of the countries have already named their managers, so there's no need to rush. Germán Mesa was mentioned behind the scenes, but I get the impression the former shortstop prefers to remain in the shadows, as a bench manager.

I prefer to wait for the next National Series to see if Danny's performance wasn't beginner's luck, because it wouldn't be the first time either.

It's still early, but it looks good.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSi Translation Staff**

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