
If There's a Swing, Let It Be Against Violence

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The baseball played in Cuba is going through a crisis of quality, discipline, and organization, aggravated in recent days by the physical aggression of Sancti Spíritus manager Eriel Sánchez against umpire Miguel Rojas.

The events, recounted with journalistic precision and cross-referenced sources in the article *Violence at Bat in the "Huelga"* by colleague Elsa Ramos in the Escambray newspaper, reveal an act of violence that could have ended in a homicide. One hopes the victim recovers without physical trauma from his injuries, though the psychological ones will likely linger for a long time.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, justifies attacking another human being with a bat. That is an aggravating factor that would influence the decision of any jury.

If we add to this that the aggressor is the person primarily responsible for controlling discipline and order within a group of athletes integrated into a team, we have a second aggravating factor.

Neither baseball nor society should contemplate the commission of physical, verbal, or symbolic aggression with passive eyes. Let us always start by calling each act by its name.

Sport must be understood as a stage for fraternization and the healthy sharing of the codes of a cultural expression synthesized in a game, regardless of the rivalry during its execution, but always within the rules established by society and by the game itself.

Lately, violent acts have increased within the two foul lines: against umpires for their decisions, against pitchers who throw inside... And outside the field of play, manifestations of this type are also repeated, as an extension of those altercations.

Some try to justify such a trend with their perception of a less tranquil society, in an attempt to normalize what must be assumed for what it is: violence, indiscipline, a breach of order.

We would be inconsistent with the type of society we want for our country if we do not apply severe measures in the face of events like the one that occurred at the José Antonio Huelga stadium in Sancti Spíritus.

We are not merely facing an exchange of words, however heated they may be; nor even blows with bare hands, but rather the use of a blunt instrument to strike a person, with injuries documented by medical specialists as irrefutable proof of the violent act.

Sanctioning is now mandatory, but the increase in disciplinary breaches should lead to greater rigor and a more comprehensive preventive strategy to avoid such conduct. That will be the best play to win the game against violence in all its manifestations.

Cuba may play a low-quality baseball, with notable absences of good players, far from its glorious times, but let it always be healthy, clean, respectful, and civilized.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque / CubaSí Translation Staff
