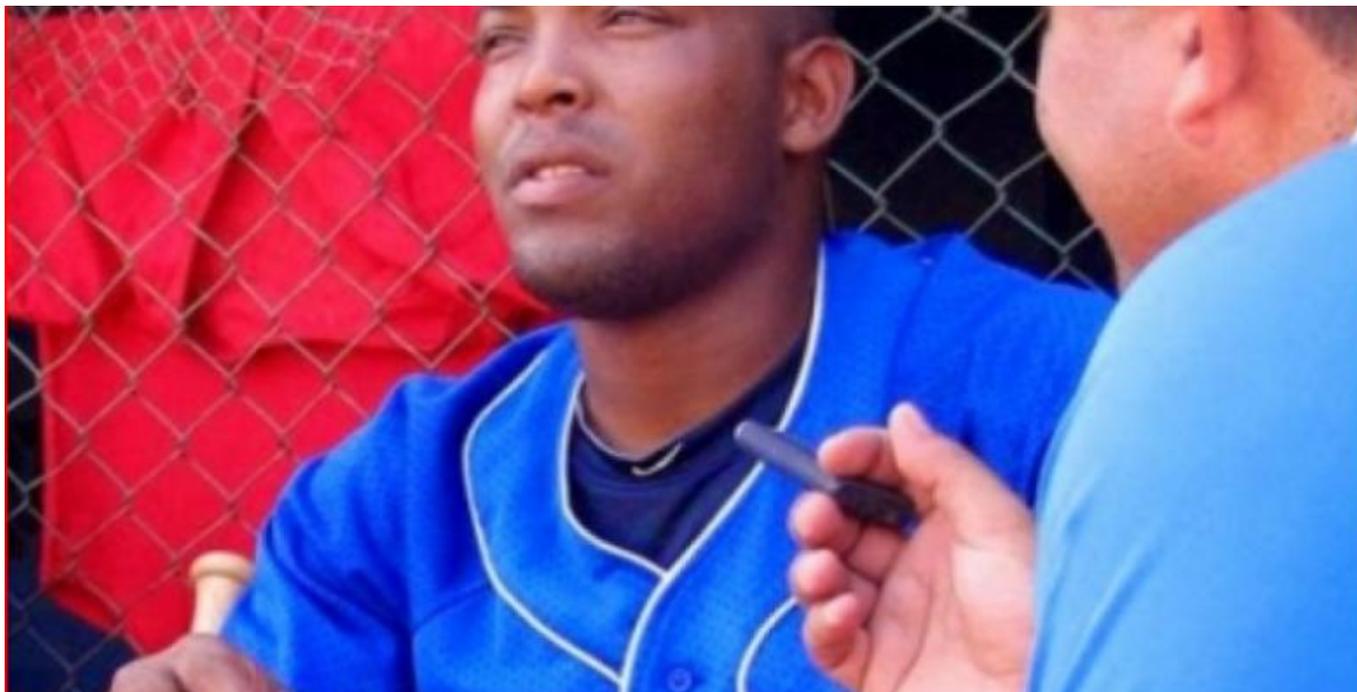


---

The Untold Story of Yasmani Tomas

24/06/2014



When it was confirmed the piece of news on June 20 many people thought: "just another one on the long list", "it took him some time", "how long will this trafficking last", just to mention the most popular phrases. Truth is the Industriales baseball player Yasmani Tomas won't play again in the Cuban domestic championship because he is heading to the MLB of the United States, although few tell the true story of his departure.

For a long time Cuban baseball has been accused of throwing their players into a vicious loop: domestic championship and the Cuba team; not pitting them or giving them away to other professional leagues around the world and low pay for their yield. These are just three hard reasons, which, little by little from the very changes in society and "not by anyone's imposition" have been modified and made more flexible, without reaching the universal remedy.

It is already possible to get a contract abroad - preferably and with greater support of the Cuban Federation if they work as middleman -, there was a boost in the salaries of all players of the domestic championship - Yulieski Gourriel, for example, wins at present more than 10 thousand Cuban pesos monthly (400 CUC at the official current exchange). Meanwhile life conditions, feeding, and lodging improve in a country where baseball is the national passion, but it's an underdeveloped country with thousands of shortages.

But the untold story of Yasmani Tomas is almost identical to that of Raicel Iglesias, Yasel Puig, Jose Dariel Abreu, Yoennis Cespedes and maybe another whom I may forget right now. Despite the signs of change, the effort for a better economic and social recognition to our players, the temptation of the largest and millionaire market is only 90 miles away. What nobody says pierces through an absurd and real blockade that establishes laws even for sports.

The U.S. federal law bans North American teams and subsidiaries to pay Cubans cash because it is "trading with the enemy". Hence Tomas and the rest have to establish legal residence in a country where they have no intention of living to attain the free agent condition and consider all the proposals that come their way, contrary to that happens with the rest of Latin players.

Another truth that must be told aloud is that the way of getting to the MLB is not just abandoning or deserting official delegations. The methods have changed and today is preferred, in many cases, paying to people or drug traffickers to transfer those talented players to Haiti - the Dominican Republic or Mexico, where the paperwork goes smoothly, with a 20% profits from their later contracts for those who made the down payment to get them out of Cuba and others incomes, 5-10% for their legal representatives.

Further investigation – far beyond the ruse they pretend to show – Puig's case is picking in the MLB, who was kidnapped for several weeks by a band of smugglers in Mujeres Island. This island is one of the spots of the Mexican cartel; everything for winning more money on the sale of the polemic player from Cienfuegos.

Is it possible to stop once and for all the theft of our best baseball players, even the youngest? Will it be necessary to give up living in Cuba to be able to play in the so-called best baseball of the world"? Are Cubans authorities to blame for this? Why the sudden signs of torpedoing and blocking the insertion of players in the Mexican League?

The answers to those questions and others we may add must undergo the normalization of relationships between Cuba and the United States – of course, lifting the blockade -, to break the political privileges that Cuban players have over the other Latin players. Baseball is still a game of balls and strikes, non ruses in which Yasmani Tomas or others are just victims that may be lost along the way before hitting a homerun or enjoy "the millions."

There is more to speak about, but this it is a fraction of the truth. Can anyone deny it?

---