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**Venezuela`s Baseball History**

**H**ow baseball first came to Venezuela is something many researchers believe came to be when Venezuelan college students who attended school in the United States and other countries first brought the game back to their home in the late 1890’s.

Amenodoro, Emilio, Gustavo and Augusto Franklin were a group of brothers who established the first baseball club  in the country called Caracas BBC.

Franklin’s brother`s dream became a reality on May 23, 1895 when the first baseball game was played two Caracas Baseball Club teams, “red” and “blue”.

The game was an impressive success with the blue team holding off the red team in route to a 28-19 victory.

Other teams appeared after that, especially in Caracas, but in 1917 Magallanes was created originally in Catia in Caracas.

In 1927 the Venezuela Baseball Federation was founded, and that year the first official championship was organized with the participation of teams like San Martín, Royal Criollos, Santa Marta and Maracay.

Venezuelan baseball changed forever when in 1941 the national team went on to win their first Amateur World Baseball Championship (later the IBAF World Cup) that same year.

This victory paired with Alejandro Carrasquel becoming the first venezuelan player in Major League Baseball in 1939 creating a passionate national interest for the sport.

By December 27th 1945 four teams came together for the country’s first championship tournament featuring four teams: Cervecería Caracas, Navegantes del Magallanes, Sabios de Vargas and Patriotas de Venezuela. Owned by four founding members, Martín Tovar Lange, Carlos Lavaud, Juan Rafael Regetti and Juan Antonio Yanez respectively.

Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional (LVBP) arrived at their 77th edition and with eight teams it has produced seven Caribbean World Series Champions: Navegantes del Magallanes (1970 and 1979), Leones del Caracas (1982 and 2006), Águilas del Zulia (1984 and 1989) and Tigres de Aragua (2009).

Many Venezuelan players have enjoyed tremendous success at the Major League level. Luis Aparicio the only venezuelan in Cooperstown has been followed by great players like Andrés Galarraga, Miguel Cabrera, Johan Santana, Francisco Rodríguez and José Altuve just to name a few.

Team Beisbol Venezuela has conquered another two IBAF Baseball World Cups (1944 and 1945), most recently won the U23 World Championship in 2020 edition and has reached the semifinals in the 2009 World Baseball Classic Edition.

Venezuela also enters the tournament as the 6th ranked team in the world, the best WBSC ranking in the history of the country, looking to conquer their first World Baseball Classic Tournament.

FEVEBEISBOL (Venezuelan Baseball Federation) has worked for six long years to reach the ultimate goal of crowning as champions in this event. In recent history Venezuela exited in the first round of the 2013 edition, after losing in the second round of the 2006 and 2017 tournaments.

This would be the 5th edition for Team Venezuela in the tournament so it is safe to say that it will be a tough competitor as they look forward to competing for the top spot in this year’s World Baseball Classic.

**Manager and Coaches**

**Omar López (Manager) Born:** January 3, 1977 **Birthplace:** Valencia, Carabobo

**Career:**Played three seasons in the minor league systems for the Chicago White Sox (1996-97) and the Arizona Diamondbacks (1998).

Begins his 25th season in the Houston Astros organization. Earned the 2010 Astros Player Development Man of the Year Award.

He has two Liga Profesional de Beisbol Venezolano (LVBP) championships earned with Caribes de Anzoátegui (2014-2015 and 2017-2018) as manager.

Was part of the coaching staff of the 2017 World Baseball Classic Team Beisbol Venezuela national.

**Carlos Mendoza (Coach) Born:** November 27, 1979 **Birthplace:** Barquisimeto, Lara

**Career:** Currently bench coach for the New York Yankees organization, will serve as bench coach for Team Beisbol Venezuela.

He played in the minor leagues for 13 seasons and his coaching career started in 2009 for the Staten Island Yankees and in 2011 he served as the Gulf Coast Yankees manager,

As he progressed through different responsibilities in the Yankees organization, he finally reached the majors in 2019. He is also the current manager for Cardenales de Lara in the LVBP.

**Rogulas Odor (Coach) Born:** January 26, 1968 **Birthplace:** Maracaibo, Zulia

**Career:** A minor league career of seven years and another season in the independent leagues, he has also been manager in the minors in three different occasions.

Since 2010 he has coached in different minor league teams, he has experience in the Venezuelan Summer League, Appalachian League, Gulf Coast League, New York Penn League among others.

He has coached alongside Omar López for several seasons in United States and Venezuela, and he will again be alongside him as first base coach in this Team Beisbol Venezuela.

**Ramón Borrego (Coach) Born:** Junio 7, 1978 **Birthplace:** Maracay, Aragua

**Career:** He was able to reach AAA in his playing career which extended from 1996 to 2002 and started his coaching career in 2005.

Borrego has an extensive coaching career with the Twins organization and also in Liga Profesional de Venezuela.

He will be third base coach for this edition of Team Beisbol Venezuela, role he has had more experience during his career.

**Rodolfo Hernández (Coach) Born:** April 9, 1968 **Birthplace:** Maracay, Aragua

**Career:** Rudy played five seasons in the minor leagues until it concluded in 1991 and has since worked his way as hitting coach, role he will fulfil for Team Beisbol Venezuela.

Hernández had stints as manager since 2004, but by 2015 he was added to the Minnesota Twins big league coaching staff.

Hernández has also been a scout for Minnesota Twins.

**Wilfredo Romero (Coach) Born:** August 5, 1974 **Birthplace:** Maracay, Aragua

**Career:** Willie played eight minor league baseball seasons and 14 pro campaings in Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional.

He has managerial experience in México and Venezuela, was 2021-2022 champion with Navegantes del Magallanes in the Venezuelan pro league. He is currently back-to-back winner of Manager of the year in Venezuela.

In total, he has five Manager of the Year Awards during his career, but his coaching experience is as hitting coach. He is currently in that role in the Anaheim Angels minor system and will be the assistant to the hitting coach in this Team Beisbol Venezuela.

**Iván Artega (Coach) Born:** July 20, 1972 **Birthplace:** Puerto Cabello, Carabobo

**Career:** Played 9 seasons in the minors league and has 10 minor league coaching seasons, he is currently DSL Marlins Pitching coach since 2019. He will serve as pitching coach for Team Beisbol Venezuela.

He also played nine pro seasons in Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional with Navegantes del Magallanes.

Arteaga spend several years in different positions as pitching coordinator for the Minnesota Twins organization.

**Luis Ramírez (Coach) Born:** July 20, 1973 **Birthplace:** Valencia, Carabobo

**Career:** Played in the minors, foring and independent leagues form 1991 to 2005, starting his professional career with the New York Yankees. He also played a few seasons in Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional.

Immediately after his playing days finished, he started his coaching career joining the Minnesota Twins organization in 2006 and in 2022 he was promoted to the Major Leagues as assistant pitching coach, responsibility which he will also have for Team Beisbol Venezuela.

Ramírez also has extensive coaching experience in Venezuela pro league.

**Pitchers**

**Germán Márquez**

**Career:** Going into his 8th Major League career, he has played every year with the Colorado Rockies becoming a silver slugger in 2018 and an All-Star in 2021. He was also fifth in the Rookie of the Year voting in 2017.

**Martín Pérez**

**Career:** Signed by the Texas Rangers as an international free agent in 2007, working on his 12th Major League season with three different teams. He represented Venezuela in the last World Baseball Classic tournament and is coming of an All-Star Season.

**Pablo López**

**Career:** Signed by the Seattle Mariners in 2012, going on his sixth Major League Season with two teams (Miami Marlins and Minnesota Twins). Will represent Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**Luis García**

**Career:** Made his Major League debut in 2020, since then he has been to two World Series, winning the latest edition with the Houston Astros. He was second in the Rookie of the Year voting in 2021 and won bronze with the U23 Team Beisbol Venezuela.

**Eduardo Rodríguez**

**Career:** Has played seven Major League Seasons with Boston and Detroit, was sixth in Cy Young voting in 2019. It will be his first time representing Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic and he plays for Navegantes del Magallanes in Venezuela.

**Jhoulys Chacín**

**Career:** He has played 14 Major League seasons with seven different teams, most recently with the Colorado Rockies. Won the Liga Venezolana de Beisbol championship this late January with Leones del Caracas and played in the Caribbean World Series in Venezuela. He represented Team Beisbol Venezuela in the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

**Jesús Luzardo**

**Career:** He has played in the Major Leagues for four seasons with Oakland and Miami, was 8th in Rookie of the Year voting in the 2020 season with the Athletics. Was drafted by the Washington Nationals in 2016 in the 3er round.

**Ranger Suarez**

**Career:** Has played five Major League seasons with the Philadelphia Phillies, he reached the World Series last season and won a game against the Houston Astros. Played an exceptional postseason going 2-0 with a 1.23 ERA.

**José Ruiz**

**Career:** Six years of Major League experience, he made his debut with the Padres in 2017 and since 2018 he has been a member of the Chicago White Sox. It will be his first time representing Team Beisbol Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic.

**Andrés Machado**

**Career:** Made his debut in the Major Leagues in 2017 with the Royals, has played another two season with the Nationals. He played for Team Beisbol Venezuela in the Olympic Qualifier in 2021 and was one win away from going to the Olympics.

**José Quijada**

**Career:** He made his debut with the Miami Marlins in the Major Leagues in 2019, has played for the Anaheim Angels since 2020. This will be his first opportunity to represent Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic.

**Silvino Bracho**

**Career:** Has played six Major League seasons with Arizona and last year with Atlanta. He won the Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Championship with Leones del Caracas in January. He represented Team Beisbol Venezuela in the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

**Carlos Hernández**

**Career:** Has played in the Major Leagues for the last three seasons with the Kansas City Royals. He won the Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Championship with Leones del Caracas in January and will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**Darwinzon Hernández**

**Career:** Signed by the Boston Red Sox in 2013, he made his debut in the Major Leagues in 2019 and has played in the MLB ever since. He will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**José Alvarado**

**Career:** Signed by the Tampa Bay Rays as a non-drafted free agent on March 13, 2012. Was part of Team Beisbol Venezuela for the 2017 World Baseball Classic and has played in the Major Leagues ever since with Tampa Bay and Philadephia.

**Catchers**

**Salvador Pérez**

**Career:** Eleven-year Major League career with the Kansas City Royals, World Series Champion and MVP in 2015, has won five gold gloves, four silver sluggers and has been an All-Star seven times. Represented Team Beisbol Venezuela in the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

**Omar Narváez**

**Career:** Made his debut in the Major Leagues in 2016 and has played seven years with the White Sox, Mariners and Brewers. Was an All-Star in 2021 and will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**Robinson Chirinos**

**Career:** Eleven-year Major League career with seven different teams, played the 2019 World Series, was part of Team Beisbol Venezuela in the 2021 Olympic Qualifier and also was on the 2017 World Baseball Classic squad.

**Infielders**

**Luis Arraez**

**Career:** Four years in the Major Leagues with the Minnesota Twins, was Rookie of the Year in 2019, he is coming from winning the American League Batting Title, was an All-Star and Silver Slugger. Also U15 World Champion with Team Beisbol Venezuela.

**José Altuve**

**Career:** Twelve-year Major-League player, eight-time All-Star, gold glove winner, six silver slugger awards, three American League batting titles, 2019 ALCS MVP, two time World Series Winner and 2017 American League MVP. Represented Team Beisbol Venezuela in 2017 World Baseball Classic.

**Eugenio Suárez**

**Career:** Nine year Major League career with Detroit, Cincinnati and Seattle, one time All-Star and played this year for the Leones del Caracas that won the Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional Championship. Will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**Andrés Giménez**

**Career:** Made his MLB debut in 2020 with the Mets and was 7th in the Rookie of the Year voting, has played two more seasons with the Indians, and is coming of a gold glove and All-Star season at second base.

**Eduardo Escobar**

**Career:** Has played twelve years in the Major Leagues with five different teams, was an All-Star in 2021 and most recently played for the Mets. He will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**Luis Rengifo**

**Career:** Four Major League seasons with the Angels after making his debut in 2019, coming of his best season, he will have the opportunity to represent Team Beisbol Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic for the first time.

**Miguel Rojas**

**Career:** Made his debut in the Major League with the Dodgers in 2014, played another eight seasons with the Marlins, before returning to Los Angeles for the 2023 season. First time representing Team Beisbol Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic.

**Gleyber Torres**

**Career:** Has played five seasons with the Yankees, becoming an All-Star a couple of times and was third in the Rookie of the Year voting in 2018. Played for the Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Champions Leones del Caracas this winter. First time representing Team Beisbol Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic.

**Miguel Cabrera**

**Career:** Fifth time representing Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic. Twenty Major League seasons with the Marlins and Tigers. World Series Champion, two time MVP, last Triple Crown winner, four batting titles and seven silver slugger. Also 3,000 hits and 500 homers.

**Outfielders**

**Yonathan Daza**

**Career:** Three year Major League experience with the Colorado Rockies, batted .301 for the first time in his career last year in 113 games. Will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**David Peralta**

**Career:** Signed by the Cardinals. Nine-year Major-League experience with Arizona and last year Tampa Bay, silver slugger and gold glove winner. Will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela for the first time in the World Baseball Classic.

**Anthony Santander**

**Career:** Signed by the Cleveland Indians, has six-year experience in the Major Leagues with Baltimore and is coming from his first 30+ homer season. Will represent Team Beisbol Venezuela in the World Baseball Classic.

**International:** Venezuela 9th place Premier 12 (2019)

**2023 Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional Standing**

Regular Season W L Pct. GB.

Leones del Caracas 36 19 .655 —

Cardenales de Lara 34 21 .618 2

Tiburones de La Guaira 29 26 .527 7

Navegantes del Magallanes 29 27 .518 7.5

Bravos de Margarita 26 29 .473 10

Tigres de Aragua 25 30 .455 11

Caribes de Anzoátegui 21 34 .382 15

Águilas del Zulia 21 35 .375 15.5

**Semifinals LVBP 2023 G P Pct. Dif.**

Leones del Caracas 10 6 .625 —

Tiburones de La Guaira 9 7 .563 1

Cardenales de Lara 8 8 .500 2

Navegantes del Magallanes 7 9 .438 3

Tigres de Aragua 6 10 .375 4

**Championship Result**

Leones del Caracas defeated Tiburones de La Guaira 4 games to 2