

Omar Linares Izquierdo

Category: Sports Glories

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Name: Omar Linares Izquierdo.

Nickname: El Niño Linares

Date of birth: October 23, 1968

Place of birth: San Juan y Martínez, Pinar del Río, Cuba

Nationality: Cuban O

Sport: Baseball

Titles: Olympic Champion, World Champion, Central American and Pan American Champion.

Omar Linares Izquierdo. Known as El Niño Linares, one of the greats of Cuban and world baseball, with several records and holder of all historical records in the National Series of Baseball; double Olympic Champion, World Champion, Central American and Pan American Champion. Glory of Cuban sport.

Biographical Synthesis



He was born on October 23, 1968 in San Juan y Martínez, Pinar del Río, son of Francisca and Fidel Linares, the first relevant figure who gave the ball to Pinar del Río, and brother of Juan Carlos Linares, another outstanding batter.

Son of sportsmen, at the age of nine he entered the Escuela de Iniciación Deportiva (EIDE), in the specialty of Athletics, in 60 meters flat and with fences. Due to health problems in sixth grade has to leave the sport, continues studies in San Juan and Martinez, but as he loves the sport begins to practice basketball and even comes to participate in a provincial event in sport, later decided to baseball, being his coach Carlos Quintana.

He participates in a regional children's competition, where he attracts a lot of attention and returns to sports school, but already as a baseball player.

He began as a baseball player in the 1970's, being from 1982 that he became known nationally when he broke into the national championship with the Vegueros team at just 15 years of age, which earned him the

eternal qualification of "El Niño Linares".

Sports career

He participated in the World Youth Championship held in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, in 1984, a year in which he was by far the most Valuable Player of the event after accumulating eight home runs, boosting 35 runs, scoring 22 and shooting 23 indisputable, in all the cases records currently in force.

After debuting as a gardener and infielder in 1982-1983 with the Vegueros without achieving a high performance, he participated in the following season, in which he showed a potential that would increase with time. From that moment on, he would begin a chain of 15 consecutive campaigns batting over 300, including eight over 400, a record in Cuban and world baseball. Such a result meant that with those high averages per series, at the end of the race ended with 367, something that no one on the planet has reached, and despite having played longer with the aluminum bat, there is no doubt that everyone knows when you are in the presence of a galactic ballplayer.

The year 1985, brought with it a new task for "El Niño", to replace the extra class Pedro Jose Rodriguez as third base in the national team, position of which he took charge in the Intercontinental Cup of Edmonton, with only 18 years.

From then on, he would show all his quality outside the borders, which would grow more and more until even the interest of the most fervent detractors of our ball was awakened, since in each international tournament he was always a key figure and protagonist in the victories of the Cuban national team.

Many were the foreign competitions where he was and shone, highlighting the three Olympic Games, in which he made himself felt, especially in the final of Atlanta 1996 where he hit three home runs in the final against Japan, and even in the final game of Sydney 2000 in which he connected two of the three hits that night accepted the U.S. right Bent Sheets.

He participated in the World Championships held in: Holland, 1986; Italy, 1988; Canada, 1990; Nicaragua, 1994, and Italy, 1998, as well as in six Intercontinental Cups, in the years 1985-1997, events in which he received disímiles honors of more valuable and better third base, besides being leader in many occasions of important departments like scored, driven, slugging, batting average and hits. Likewise, Omar Linares was able to accumulate averages above 400 in the sum of each event and in a general way regarding his participation with the Cuba team.

Other important moments were starred by him in competitions such as the Pan American Games and the Central American and Caribbean Games,

always standing out as the third bat in a team full of stars that also made time. In this type of competitions it is impossible to avoid that home run in the continental appointment of Winnipeg 1999 that served to give decisive advantage to the Antillean selection against a difficult Canada, in a game that gave the Olympic ticket to the team Cuba.

Omar Linares Izquierdo was one of the most relevant years when the historic Cuba-Orioles Tope of Baltimore was developed, driving the race for the draw in the Havana match, and hitting four indisputable in Maryland.

At the same time of the exploits outside the country, it is more than evident that the results in the Cuban Championship were simply masterful, something that propitiated that in less than 15 years it was introduced among the best in the majority of the offensive

- leader of several divisions:
- In the 1985, 1986, 1990 and 1992 seasons, he maintained the leadership of the offensive average.
 - In scored races he was leader in 1985, 1987, 1993 and 1995.
 - He was also leader in three pointers in 1985.
 - Leader in ball bases in the 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 2000 series.
 - Batted over 400 in 7 seasons.

AVE: SN 91-92, 89-90, 92-93, 84-85, 85-86; SS 92. CA: SN 84-85, 86-87, 88-89, 89-90, 92-93, 93-94, 94-95; SS 91, 92. H: SS 90. 3B: SN 84-185. HR: SS 92. CI: SS 88, 92. BB: SN 91-92, 92-93, 93-94, 94-95, 95-96, 99-00. SS 91, 92, 94.

Relevant facts

- More Runs Scored for Life in National Series, with 1547.
- Best Lifetime Offensive Average in National Series and any type of tournament, with 368.
- Best Lifetime Slugging Average in National Series.
- Youngest player in reaching 100, 200, 300 and 400 home runs in National Series.
- Youngest player to play regular in the Cuba team, with 18 years.
- Youngest player to play in National Series, at age 15.
- Records of hits, propelled, scored and home runs in a World Youth Championship.
- The only batter to win the Triple Crown in Cuba in the 1992 Selective.
- Batter with more consecutive seasons batting over 300, with 15.
- The only batter with three home runs in a game at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996.
- Youngest batter in reaching 1000 and 2000 hits in National Series.
- Best Offensive Average in Selective Series.
- Youngest player in 20 National Series.
- Youngest player in reaching 1000 pushes and 1000 runs scored.

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- He and Wilfredo Sanchez are the ones who on 6 occasions have been champion at bat.
- Player who has been leader in runs scored most times in National Series with 9.
- Player who has batted over 400 times, with 8.
- Selected by the people among the 100 best athletes of the 20th century.

Collective Victories

- National Series: 1984-1985, 1986-1987, 1987-1988, 1996-1997, 1997-1998
- Selective Series: 1984, 1988, 1991, 1994
- Olympic Games: Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996
- World Championships: Holland 1986, Italy 1988, Canada 1990, Nicaragua 1994, Italy 1998, Chinese Taipei 2001
- Intercontinental Cups: Canada 1985, Cuba 1987, Puerto Rico 1989, Spain 1991, Italy 1993, Cuba 1995
- Pan American Games: Indianapolis 1987, Havana 1991, Mar del Plata 1995, Winnipeg 1999
- Central American and Caribbean Games: Santiago de los Caballeros 1986, Mexico 1990, Ponce 1993, Maracaibo 1998

Withdrawal from active sport

Halfway through the 1990s, Omar's successful life would see a series of different types of injuries that even brought him to the operating room, and although the performance was still very good, he no longer played the same number of games, so even when he batted over 300, the numbers in other caps were far from those of yesteryear. That's why he decided to retire from active baseball in Cuba, five years after being in the last international competition, the 2001 World Cup, and despite the discontent of the vast majority of fans.

On June 16, 2002, at the age of 34 and of his own free will, he withdrew from active sport; in the same stadium that saw so many feats of this baseball player, Captain San Luis, he said goodbye forever, when he fired a deep blow into the center field captured by Yunieski Gourriel in order to qualify Sancti Spíritus for the final of the contest, and the Pinar del Río team was left in the way.

This was the end of one of the greatest baseball races in the second country that began the practice of the discipline in the world. Behind them were unforgettable facts and records that, together with his class beyond statistics, are reasons for many to place him as the best, although there were certainly stellars like Orestes Kindelán, Víctor Mesa, Luis Giraldo Casanova, Antonio Muñoz and Antonio Pacheco, which should never be ignored.

Outside the comparisons, what is a reality is that this baseball

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player crossed the archipelago and delighted everyone for the integrity and professional level, for the marks, for the opportune hits, for the Cuban one hundred percent, for offering everyone a baseball that will never be surpassed. . So let this "Immortal Child" be great, the one who will eternally remain in every heart as a star without equal, one of those that up to beyond the seas are not seen very often because they are simply that, stars.

After the retirement of the national team he played three seasons in the Japanese Professional Baseball League. In November 2014, he was inducted into the Cuban Baseball Hall of Fame along with nine other baseball players.