

NR gets sports

17Aug91 CUBA: U.S. LOSES PANAM BASEBALL SEMI-FINAL: MANAGER EXPELLED.

By Llewellyn Martin

HAVANA, Aug 16, Reuter - The United States lost their baseball semi-final against Puerto Rico 7 - 1 in Havana on Friday in a game marred by the expulsion of the American manager from the game after disputing a sixth inning call by the Cuban head umpire.

The Puerto Rican win advanced them to the final against the winner of the Cuba-Dominican Republic game later Friday. The United States will play the loser for the bronze medal.

Manager Ron Polk was expelled for disputing a balk call against relief pitcher Ken Steenstra which scored Puerto Rico's fifth run.

It was the latest disappointment for the United States during the Pan American Games this week when the American men's and women's basketball teams and the men's waterpolo team have all gone into their games favourites only to be denied gold medals.

The Games have turned into a near-nightmare for the United States since they started Aug 2 with hosts Cuba poised to dethrone the Americans for the first time since the inaugural Games 40 years ago as the top gold medals winner.

In the baseball semi-final, which had been expected to result in a U.S. win which would set up a much-awaited re-match with Cuba for the gold medal, the Americans started well scoring the opening run in the bottom of the first with a home run by Chris Roberts.

But in the top of the third, Puerto Rico's Efrain Garcia hit a grand slam homer to make the score 4-1.

Starting U.S. pitcher Jeff Ware was replaced by Kenny Steenstra with two men on and two men out in the third.

U.S. team manager Polk, who had been unhappy with a number of calls by the umpires, lost his temper in the top of the sixth.

The head umpire, a Cuban, ordered 46-year-old Polk to leave the ballpark after he yelled, pushed and shoved during a disagreement over a balk call.

U.S. pitcher Kenzie Steenstra took his full wind-up and then threw to first base in an attempt to catch the runner off base.

The balk advanced Puerto Rico's Manuel Serrano, who was on third, to score a fifth run, giving them a 5-1 lead against the Americans.

Polk stormed on to the field and had to be restrained by the other umpires as he shouted and waved his arms at the home plate official.

After gesturing in disgust, Polk collected his suitcase and left to the boos of the mainly Cuban crowd.

Puerto Rico put the game completely out of the Americans reach by scoring two more in the top of the eighth.

The winning pitcher was Wilfredo Velez, who threw throughout the game.

Puerto Rico had 11 hits and the U.S. had seven hits.

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