

Leader Matanzas widens lead in Cuban Elite Baseball League

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Havana, December 5 (PL) - The Matanzas Crocodiles extended their string of successes to seven by defeating Industriales 9-3, a result that extended their lead in the Cuban Baseball Elite League.

In this game, Dariel Álvarez made his debut with the Matanzas team, the fourth former Major League Baseball player to return to national tournaments, three of them with the same team, where Erisbel Arruebarrena and Rusney Castillo also made their debuts.

Álvarez played six seasons with the Camagüey team, his province of origin, before trying out in MLB with the Baltimore Orioles, in addition to playing in the best circuits of Japan and Mexico.

Placed fifth in the lineup, the luxury reinforcement hit his first home run in the winter league, although the best hitters of his team were Yurisbel Gracial, author of a pair of home runs and Luis Angel Sanchez (4-3), who supported the work of pitcher Jesus Enrique Perez (5.0 IP, 1CL, 4H, 1K, 2BB), winner in the

battle of the pitchers with Reemberto Barreto.

The victory put the tournament leaders on the verge of sweeping the Leones in the four-game sub-series that concludes tomorrow.

Sancti Spíritus broke the losing dynamic that implied six setbacks in a row and knocked out Las Tunas 10-0 in eight innings with superb work by starter José Abel Campos (6.1IP, 1H, 4K), who retired 19 batters in his order until Yordanis Alarcón hit a home run in the seventh inning.

The Gallos racked up 15 hits, with seven multi-hit batters, led by Frederich Cepeda, who scored four runs with a pair of two-run homers, an offense that led Dariel Góngora to his first loss of the tournament.

Santiago de Cuba took the lead in the particular match against Artemisa after the 9-4 victory of reliever Osvaldo Acuña (4.0 IP, 2H, 4K, 3BB), helped by Guillermo García and Robert Luis Delgado, who each drove in two runs. Young pitcher Darío Sarduy suffered the loss.

After these results, Matanzas (14-9) is two games ahead of Sancti Spíritus, Industriales and Las Tunas (all 12-11), and out of the post-season qualification zone are Artemisa (11-12) and Santiago de Cuba (8-15).

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