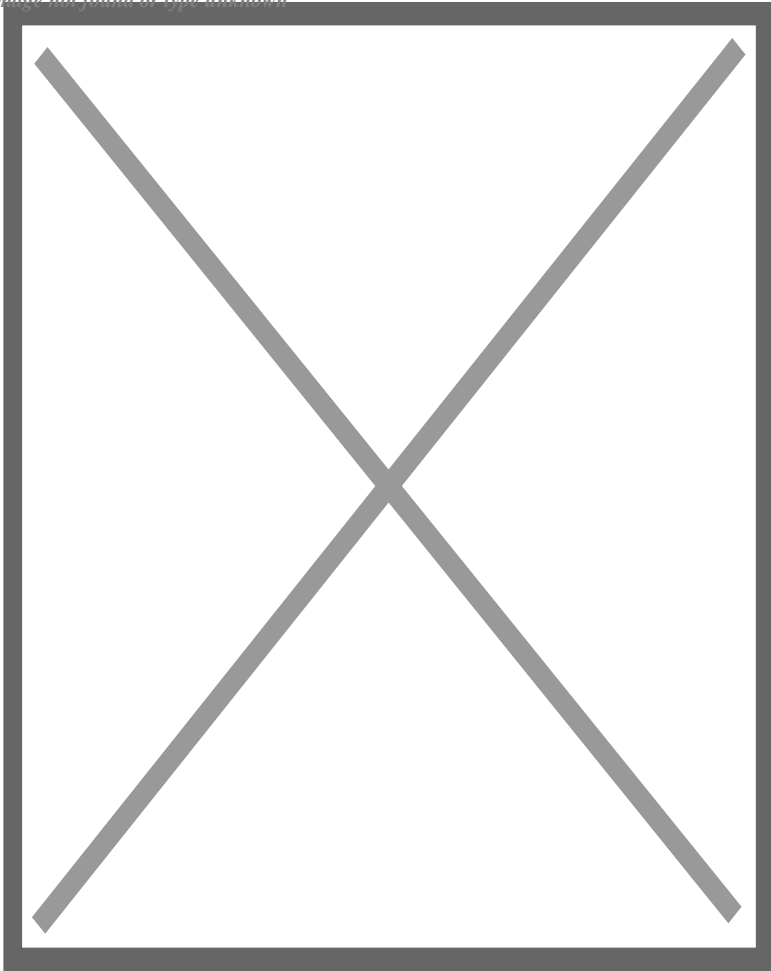


Four teams tied at the top of the Cuban baseball standings

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Havana, March 15 (PL) - With its victory against Guantanamo, the team of Las Tunas exhibits the best winning streak in the beginning of the season and shares the leadership of the young Cuban National Baseball Series.

The Leñadores needed an extra inning on Thursday to leave the Guantanamo Indians on the field by 5-4 with Rafael Viñales' jit that secured the second hit for closer Alberto Pablo Civil.

Dennis Peña led the attack of last season's champions with three hits in four innings, including his third home run, co-leader in that ranking.

Along with the Tuneros, the teams of Pinar del Río, Ciego de Ávila and Sancti Spíritus, winners against Industriales, Holguín and Mayabeque, respectively, were at the forefront of the tournament.

The Vegueros of Pinar de Pinar defeated the Leones of Havana by a tight 2-1 score, led by pitcher Frank Luis Medina, who covered the entire route with one clean run, seven hits, four strikeouts and one ticket.

The Tigres avileños scored the most disproportionate score of the day (19-3), in a game where Liosvani Pérez batted 5-3 with four RBI, to support the opening run of Dachel Duquesne (7.0 IP, 3CL, 12H, 4K, 1BB).

The other leader, the Gallos espirituanos overcame the Huracanes de Mayabeque by 11-4, individual victory for the reliever Diosmel Hernández and the second shutout of Yankiel Mauris, who counted on the offensive support of Lázaro Fernández, 4-3, including a homerun and a home run, and five RBIs.

With two home runs by international Yoelkis Guibert, Santiago de Cuba beat Granma 12-5, with Yosiel Serrano winning. For Granma, star Alfredo Despaigne hit it out of the park, his third of the young series and the 266th of his career.

From the rest of the program, Camagüey's first victory over Villa Clara by 2-1 and Cienfuegos' second success over Matanzas (6-4) stand out.

Finally, Artemisa left La Isla lying on the grass by 3-1, thanks to Andy Cosme's home run with a runner on base.

After Las Tunas, Pinar del Río, Sancti Spíritus and Ciego de Ávila, all 4-1, come Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Industriales (3-2).

Then come Artemisa, Cienfuegos, Granma, Villa Clara, Matanzas and Mayabeque (2-3), while Guantánamo, Camagüey and La Isla share the last place (1-4).

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