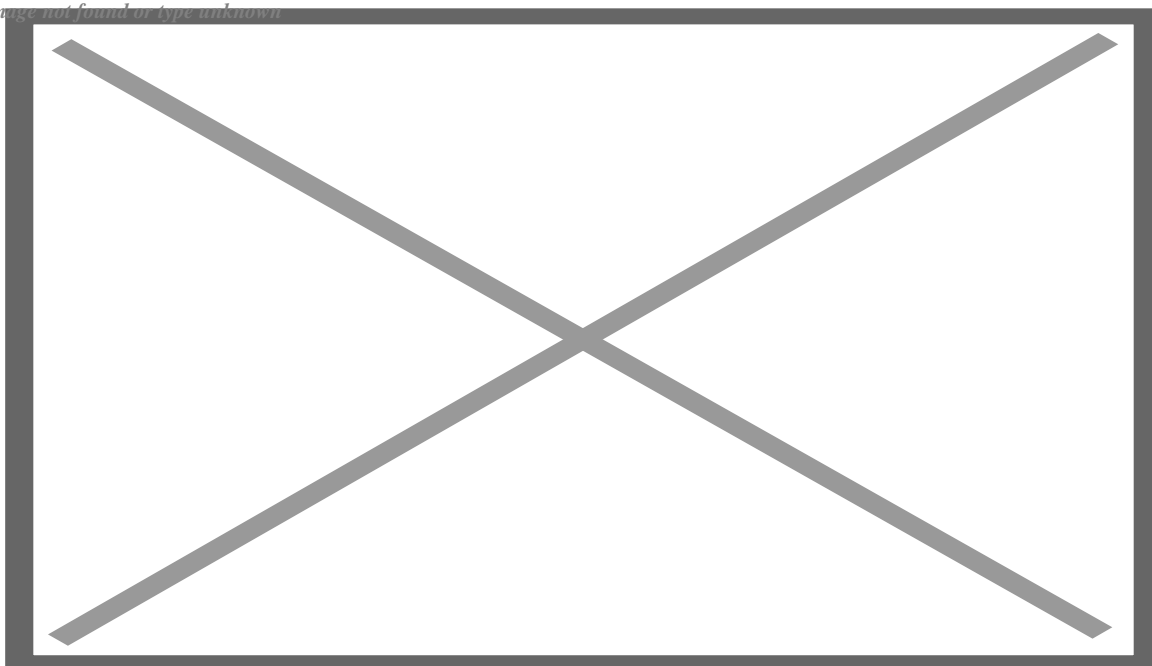


Historic game on Opening Day of the 62nd National Baseball Series

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Baseball

Havana, March 30 (RHC)-- A walk off hit by pinch hitter Pedro Almeida in the bottom of the ninth inning for the reigning champions, Alazanes de Granma, provided Matanzas (3x2) its first defeat of the season, in a duel that officially inaugurated the 62nd National Baseball Series.

At the Mártires de Barbados stadium in Bayamo, Almeida's decisive hit was against a delivery by Noelvis Entenza. The triumph was guaranteed by reliever Carlos Santana, who barely got one out.

This game was historic for several reasons: for the first time, the umpiring crew was made up of four women led by the experienced Yanet Moreno; the official retirement of the seasoned mentor Carlos Martí took place: and the stands were thrilled with the presence of slugger Alfredo Despaigne in the batter's box.

The so-called Horse of the Horses played until last season with the SoftBank Hawks, in the Japanese professional league, and to prove his real worth, today he was the most important hitter of the Alazanes, hitting 2-3 and driving in a run.

Meanwhile, at the Latinoamericano Park, Industriales gave Ciego de Avila its first knockout of the season (13x3 in seven innings), with a five-run cluster in the seventh act.

For the Leones, right fielder Yosvany Peñalver (2-3, pair of doubles and three runs batted in) and first-baseman and clean-up batter Yasiel Santoya (3-4, two homers and two runs batted in) stood out. Right-hander Pavel Hernández won the game.

The only shutout of the day was by Mayabeque against Holguín (4x0), away at the Calixto García stadium. Yadián Martínez won despite allowing five hits and giving away an equal number of tickets in 6.0 innings. First save for Adrián Sosa, who pitched three unblemished chapters.

Juan Manuel Martínez (2-3) was the best hitter for the Hurricanes. There was a home run by Rangel Ramos.

In the other results, Santiago de Cuba defeated Artemisa 6x5, Villa Clara 5x4 to Cienfuegos and Sancti Spíritus 10x3 to Camagüey, with a 4-RBI game by Rodolexis Moreno; La Isla defeated Las Tunas 6x3 and Pinar del Río 10x2 to Guantánamo.

This Thursday all the sub-series will consist of a double-header starting at 10:00 a.m.

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