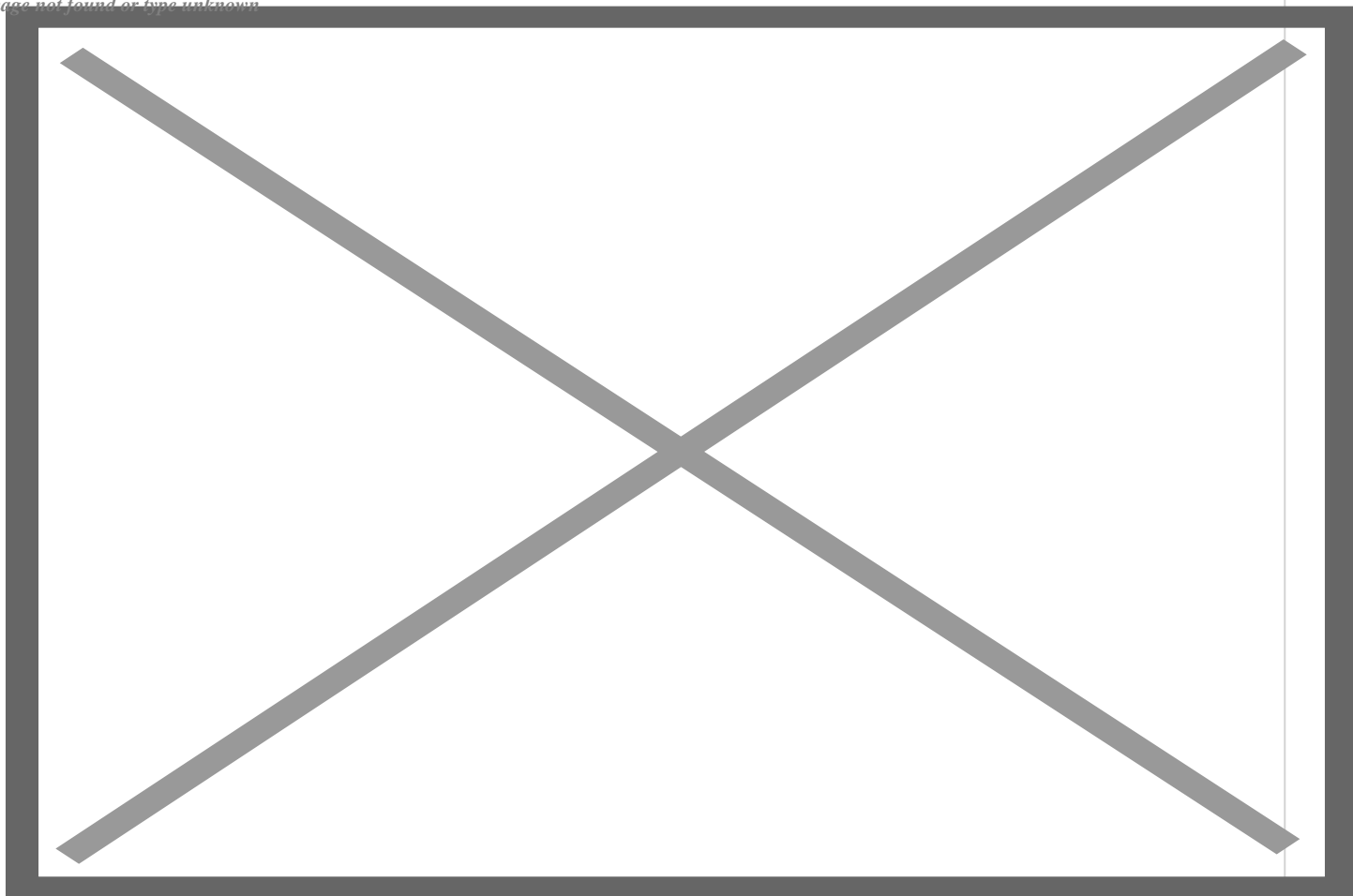


Granma and Matanzas reach Cuban baseball finals

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Havana, June 14 (RHC)-- Granma and Matanzas were one step away from reaching the final of the 61st Cuban Baseball Series, after defeating Ciego de Avila (8-2) and Sancti Spíritus (5-4), respectively.

Alazanes and Cocodrilos kept a perfect pace in the semifinals to place 3-0 in their duels against Tigres and Gallos, which are obliged to sweep the remaining four games if they intend to keep their intention of challenging for the title of the competition.

Led by manager Carlos Martí, the Granmenses did not believe in the pressure of the Avileño crowd and took the lead from the first inning with a grand slam by catcher Iván Prieto (5-2, 4CI, 1CA, 1HR, 1-2B), to silence the stands of the José Ramón Cepero stadium.

The visitors' offensive party totaled 11 hits, and included two more homers by fourth baseman Guillermo Avilés (3-2, 4CI, 3CA, 2HR) and a multi-hit game by torpedo Yulián Milián (5-2).

The success also had the flavor of pitcher Yunier Castillo, who worked seven chapters and allowed only one run and three rockets before scoring the victory, while avileño Luis Marrero (2.0, 6C, 5CL, 10H, 1BB) took the setback in his biography.

In the other playoff, the Saurios once again staged a comeback over the Gallos, after scoring two runs in the bottom of the eighth to maximize the passions at the Victoria de Girón Park.

The squad of mentor Armando Ferrer cheered the decisive home run of shortstop Erisbel Arruebarena (3-2, 4CI, 1CA, 1HR, 1-2B) and the dominance of left-handed pitcher Yamichel Perez (9.0, 4C, 8H, 4K, 2BB), capable of going all nine innings.

Thus, Granma and Matanzas, champion and runner-up of the previous season, have the possibility of certifying their tickets to the last instance today, starting at 2:00 p.m. local time, although their rivals will try to change history.

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