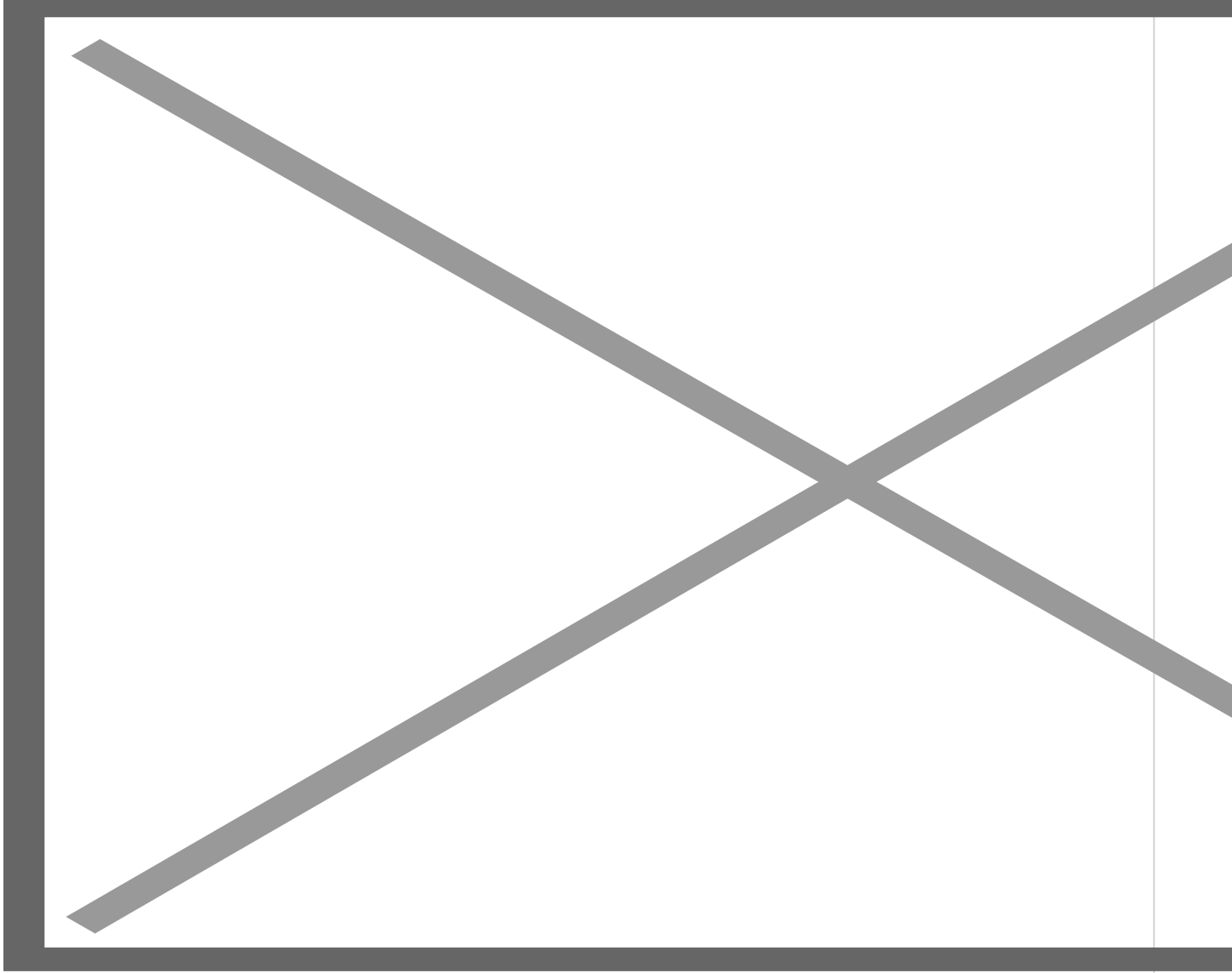


# *Granma doesn't believe in Cocodrilos' tears in Cuban baseball final*

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**Granma celebrates victory**

Bayamo, June 28 (PL) - In the umpteenth test of resistance standard, Alazanes de Granma broke the odds against them and beat Cocodrilos de Matanzas 3-1 today to force the last duel in the Cuban baseball final.

Achieving that designation was far from an easy task: game resumed from the previous date, schedule close to noon and pessimism before the possibility of rains, which added more drama to a playoff now tied 3-3.

As the match was divided into a pair of matchdays, each one had its own nuances, names, controversies and even different protagonists in the stands of a facility filled with euphoria.

Both teams threatened early -in the very first inning- as a kind of prologue of what would come later, but the pitchers "stuck their arm in" to solve the difficulties and economize on emotions.

The calm was short-lived in a Mártires de Barbados stadium with no room for a pin: William Luis connected a hit, the pitcher Joel Mojena made a mistake on Andrys Pérez's connection, Yoisnel Camejo fired a single and the Matanzas opened the scoreboard in the second act.

Minutes later and without warning, the rain burst into the so-called Monument City, flooded the competitive surface and the Organizing Committee decided to suspend the game in order to add expectations.

Finally, the resumption took place this Tuesday at 10:30, local time, and Matanzas pitcher Dariel Góngora (3.1, 2C, 4H, 2BB, 1DB) did not return with power and Osvaldo Abreu (2-2, 1CI) fired a hit to tie the contest.

Under the relentless sun one act later, the lefty Góngora got into trouble again, after a ticket to Carlos Benítez, a ball to Alexquemer Sánchez and an infield hit by Darián Palma.

With the pads congested, the Matanzas high command decided to remove their starter from the mound and trust in the speedy Naykel Cruz (4.2, 1C, 3H), one of the country's main talents in the difficult art of pitching.

Owner of the number 21 on his back, Cruz gave straight lines of more than 90 miles, dominated Yulián Milán, but lost control in front of substitute David Tamayo to open the doors to Benítez.

In the opposite trench, manager Carlos Martí varied his strategy, eliminated Mojena (3.0, 1C, 3H, 3BB) and restarted the battle with another pitcher in the box: Yunier Castillo, who made his debut in the final 14 days after his previous appearance.

Despite the prolonged rest, Castillo (6.0, 0C, 4H) rounded off a fine performance and completed six innings with no runs, three rockets allowed and an exquisite precision in his almost 90 deliveries.

The Alazanes finished the game in the bottom of the eighth, thanks to a base on balls to Sánchez, an infield hit by Palma, a sacrifice bunt by Milán and an error by third baseman Jefferson Delgado on a bunt by Millán.

The victory was sculpted with the chisel of the collective sacrifice, although there were two men who gave their best: the leadoff man Abreu (2-2, 1CI) and the winner Castillo, the most valuable of a success with the air of a comeback.

Thus, the 61st National Baseball Series will have a decision in its last day, with Granma and Matanzas ready to fight for the reign of the maximum sports spectacle on the island.

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## RESULT

Game 6: Barbados Martyrs Stadium.

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Winner: Yunier Castillo (1-0).

Lost: Dariel Góngora (2-3).

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