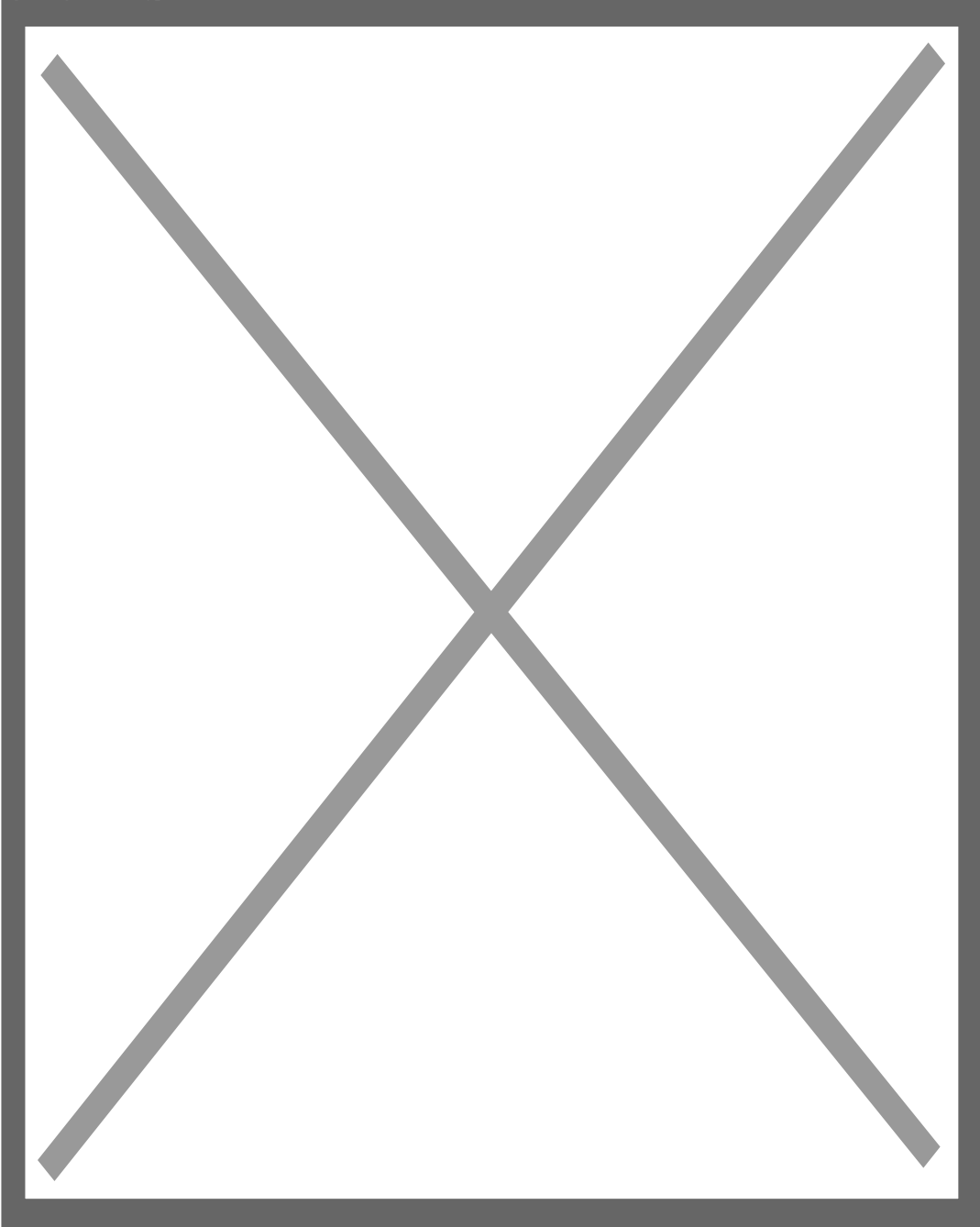


Raidel wins Japan baseball and saves title

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Raidel Martinez saves 19th game in Japanese baseball

Havana, October 3 (JIT)-- Cuban Raidel Martinez mathematically secured the Central League and saves title in Japanese professional baseball.

The right-hander from Pinar del Rio and Team Cuba scored his thirty-ninth save of the season on Sunday in the 3x0 victory of the Chunichi Dragons over the Hiroshima Carp in the Japanese elite league.

The lanky stopper pitched a perfect inning of relief, reduced his effectiveness to 0.97 and became the third Latin to win that distinction, after Dominican Rafael Dolis and Venezuelan Robert Suarez, who won it twice.

In that game, also for Chunichi, Dayán Viciado went 4-1 with a double, a run scored and a run batted in to close the season with a .294 average and 63 towing runs.

In the Pacific League, the Softbank Falcons team, in which several Cubans play, lost the circuit title on the last day of the qualifying phase.

After losing 3x5 to the Lotte Marinos, they finished tied with the Orix Buffaloes with a balance of 76 wins, 65 losses and two ties, but lost the particular series 15-10.

On October 8, the climax series in both circuits will begin with a best-of-three series.

In the Central League, the DeNA All-Stars and Hanshin Tigers will face each other, and in the Pacific League, the Softbank Falcons and Seibu Lions will meet, always at the home of the former.

The winners will advance to the finals of each circuit. The Yakult Swallows await in the Central and the Pacific, the Orix Buffaloes, leaders of the qualifying phase, await in the Pacific. These duels will be of seven games to win four, with the detail that the already secured teams will start with a victory in their favor.

The winners of each League will meet in the Japan Series starting on October 22nd.

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