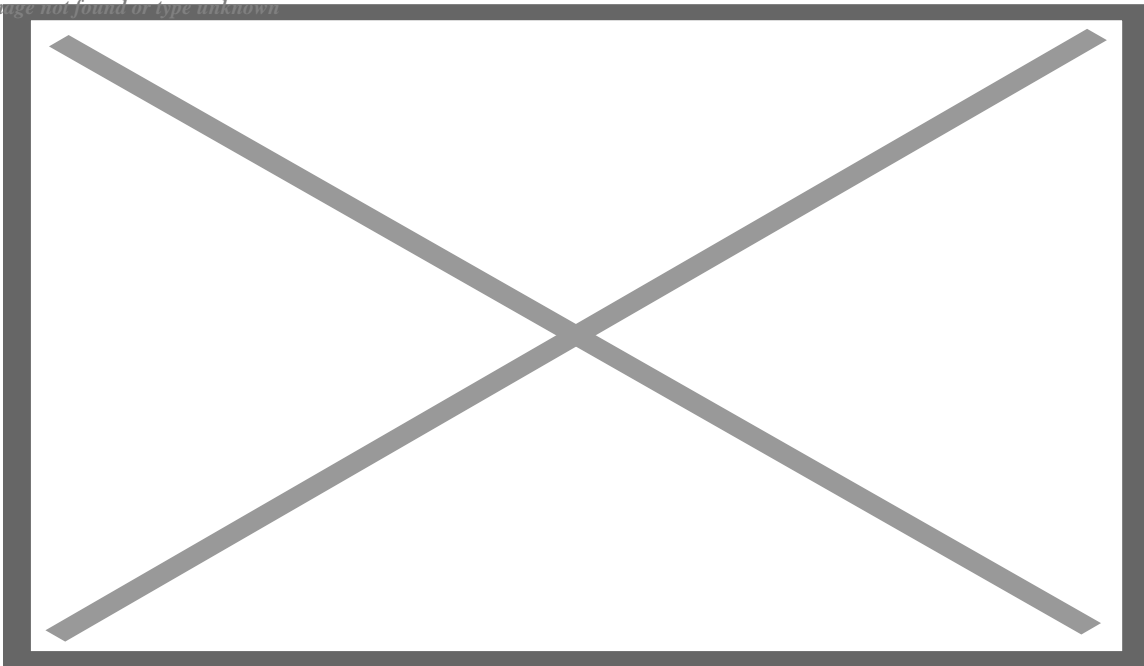


Despaigne and Gracial win, but the Falcons fall in Japanese baseball

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Gracial and Despaigne with the Falcons

Havana, October 13 (ACN)-- Cubans Alfredo Despaigne and Yurisbel Gracial hit one hit apiece, but the SoftBank Falcons fell 0-5 to the Orix Buffaloes, at the start of the semifinal play-off of the Pacific zone in the Japanese Professional Baseball League.

Away at the Kyocera Dome in Osaka, Despaigne, a designated hitter, had one hit in four visits to the plate to leave his starting average at 250.

Meanwhile, Matanzas outfielder Gracial did not start as a regular in the lineup, but was sent in to bat as a pinch hitter and hit a single to close that first game with an average of 1.000.

With this win, Orix takes a 2-0 lead over the Falcons, since the Japanese league's competitive rules dictate that the winner of each zone advances to the semifinals with an early victory.

Despaigne was key with his lumber at the ready in the four titles of the so-called Japan Series, won consecutively by SoftBank in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Meanwhile, Gracial exhibits three cetros with that franchise in the Pacific zone.

Meanwhile, in the Central League semifinal, the Yakult Swallows defeated the Hanshin Tigers 7-1 at Tokyo's Meiji Jingu Stadium and also put the series 2-0 in their favor.

Venezuelan Jose Osuna and Dominican Domingo Santana each homered and drove in three runs Wednesday to lead Yakult to the win

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