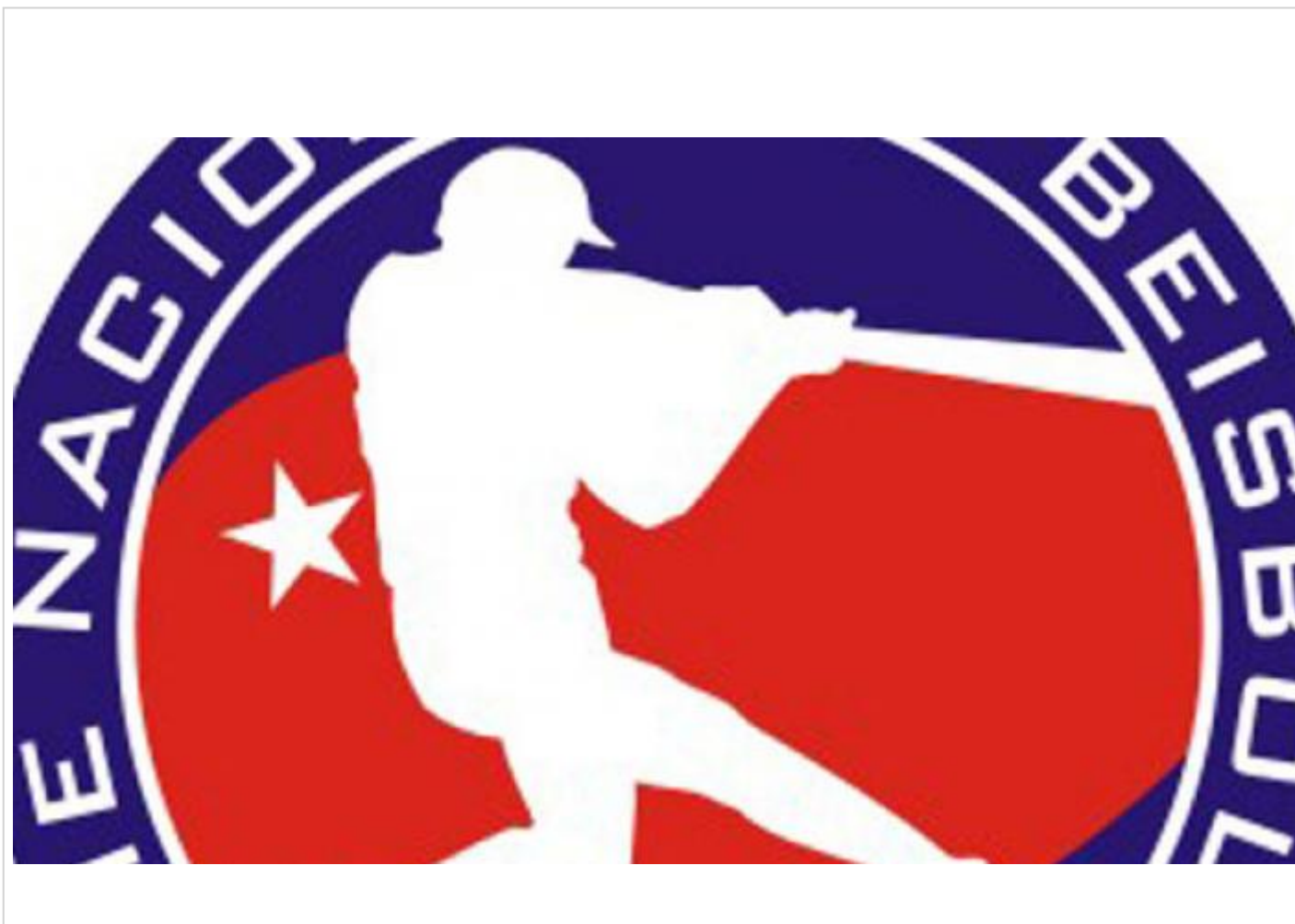


Rivalry increases for last playoff spots in Cuban baseball



Havana, June 12 (PL) - Mayabeque's losing streak and Ciego de Avila's games suspended due to rain increase expectations for the last spots in the Cuban baseball postseason, at the conclusion of the penultimate sub-series of the Cuban championship on Monday.

The Huracanes have five losses in a row, the last four against Industriales, and left the qualification zone on Sunday.

The Industriales Leones won the most recent game by 12-11 with home runs by Ariel Hechevarría and Yosvani Peñalver, while Juan Xavier Peñalver signed his eleventh game saved, one behind the leader Vladimir García.

Holguín took advantage of the setback to move up to seventh place in the standings after defeating Pinar del Río by a score of 11-4, a game in which Edilse Silva hit one of the four home runs with bases loaded of the day.

For Pinar, Yasser Julio González hit a pair of home runs, with which he caught up with Dayán García and Osday Silva in the lead (all three with 15).

The Tigres avileños remained in eighth place, despite the fact that they have not been able to start their pairing with Santiago de Cuba because of the rains.

Weather permitting, Ciego and Santiago will play a doubleheader on Monday.

The Leopards of Villa Clara kept their chances after defeating La Isla, 2-1, and the Toros of Camagüey beat Artemisa 5-3.

Sunday's game kept Las Tunas in first place after splitting honors with runner-up Matanzas.

The Cocodrilos secured the sealed game by 5-4, but were left on the field in the following game by 7-6.

Tunero pitcher Rodolfo Díaz worked three innings and signed his ninth win, top winner of the championship, a match in which his teammate Dailier Peña hit a home run with bases loaded and Erisbel Arruebarrena hit a pair of homers for the defeated team.

In the victory of Sancti Spíritus over Granma (9-6), Duniesky Barroso for the Spirituanos and Guillermo Avilés for the Alazanes hit home runs with the bases loaded.

In addition to the suspension in Ciego de Avila, the game between Cienfuegos and Guantánamo could not be played either.

The standings are still headed by Las Tunas (38-26), escorted by Santiago de Cuba (37-27), Industriales (38-30), Matanzas and Sancti Spíritus (both with 36-30), Artemisa (34-30), Holguín (34-32) and Ciego de Ávila (30-29).

Outside the classification zone are Mayabeque (34-33), Villa Clara (33-34), La Isla and Camagüey (both with 30-33), Granma (31-35), Pinar del Río (30-35), Cienfuegos (25-39) and Guantánamo (21-41).

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