

Matanzas regains lead in Elite Baseball League



Las Tunas, December 11 (JIT) - The Matanzas team defeated Las Tunas 5x4 and regained a two-game lead at the top of the II Elite League of Cuban Baseball.

Starter Jesús Enrique Pérez (5.0 IP, 2CL, 9H, 1K, 1BB) was backed up by the bat of outfielders Alexander Pozo (5-3) and Eduardo Blanco (4-2), both with two RBI each. Former major leaguer Rusney Castillo had three hits in four innings.

The hosts wasted the opportunity to at least tie the game in the ninth inning, when Osvaldo Abreu led off with a double, but closer Armando Dueñas overpowered Yosvani Alarcón, Rafael Viñales and Denis Peña to get the "tapón".

Just as in the previous sub-series, both teams shared equally the wins to close the particular confrontation with a balance of four wins for each one.

Industriales showed signs of recovery by beating Artemisa (9x5) for the second day in a row, a result that produced a three-way tie for third to fifth place in the standings.

Outfielder Yoasnier Pérez hit a double and a home run in four at-bats that were enough to drive in five runs, enough to support the work of the Blue's bullpen, whose members Rafael Perdomo and Juan Xavier Peñalver had a hit and a save, respectively.

Elián Moreno suffered the setback, despite hits by Dennis Laza and José Antonio Jiménez.

The match ended 2-2 and the overall league score was equally close at four wins per team.

Santiago de Cuba defeated Sancti Spíritus 8x4, a victory recorded by reliever Yosmel Garcés (4.2 IP, 3H, 5K, 1BB) and the pitching of Reynaldo Álvarez, who combined to overcome Yunier Batista.

The international Yordan Manduley hit a double and a home run in four trips to the plate, with which he towed three runs for the Avispas orientales, a team obliged to establish a winning streak to aspire to a semifinalist place.

In the game, Frédérich Cepeda hit a pair of two-run homers and is now 451, second on the all-time list, just two less than the also active Yordanis Samón.

The sub-series ended with two wins on each side, but the Espirituanos dominated the overall series with a 6-2 record.

After 28 games, Matanzas (17-11) leads the standings followed by Sancti Spíritus (15-13), Artemisa, Las Tunas and Industriales (all with 14-14) and Santiago de Cuba (10-18). There are 12 games left in the regular schedule to decide the four qualifiers for the post-season scheduled for January.

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