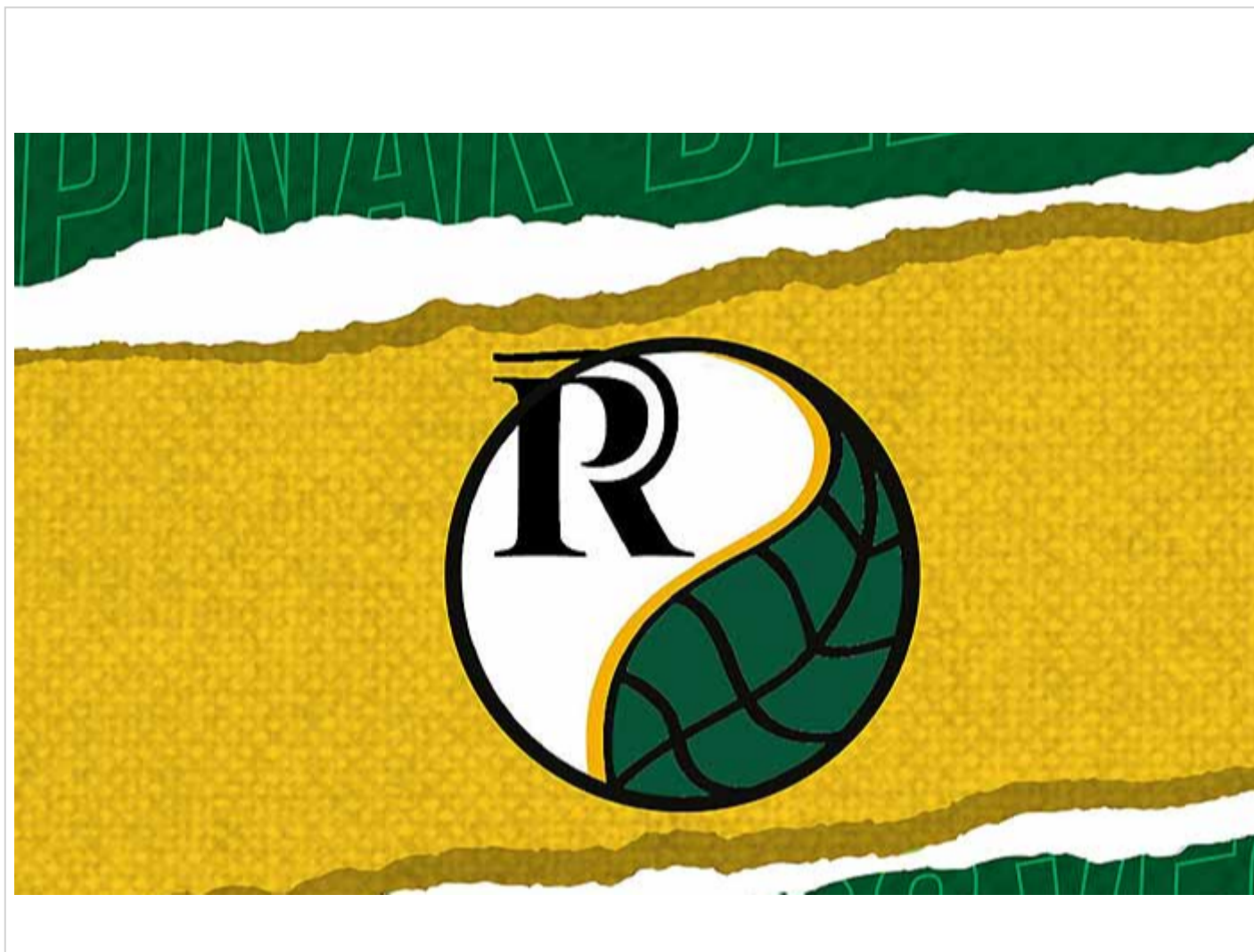


Vegueros de Pinar ratifies leadership in Cuban baseball tournament



Havana, April 11 (PL) - The Pinar del Rio team strengthened its position at the top of Cuban baseball with the help of former major leaguer Alexei Ramirez, while Alfredo Despaigne remained as the only leader in home runs in the most recent date of the Cuban baseball championship.

The Vegueros de Pinar signed their sixth straight victory on Wednesday by beating Holguin 11-5, in a game where Alexei Ramirez was the most valuable player with a pair of runs and seven towers.

Ciego de Avila was only in second place, one run behind the leader, although it agonized in the ninth inning to secure an 8-7 win over Artemisa.

The Cazadores de Artemisa scored four times in the final inning, but fell short against the Tigres, who dropped a losing streak to five and fell from the top of the standings.

Industriales was two units behind, victim of the good work of pitcher Freddy Asiel Álvarez (7.0 IP, 1CL, 4H, 6K, to lead the Leopards of Villa Clara to a 6-1 victory.

Las Tunas held on to fourth place with its 11-3 win over a Mayabeque.

Granma, as the offensive leader of the tournament, pummeled Sancti Spíritus 12-1, with the eleventh home run by Alfredo Despaigne, who regained the solo lead among home run producers.

Matanzas also defeated Guantánamo (12-2), with the first victory in the national series of the 17-year-old pitcher Shaiel Cruz of the Matanzas Crocodiles.

The day was completed with the wins of Cienfuegos against Santiago de Cuba (13-1), and of La Isla over Camagüey by 9-6 with the third rescue of Yadier Garay.

Behind Pinar del Río (18-6), Ciego de Ávila (17-7) and Industriales (16-8) are Las Tunas (12-7), Granma (14-10), Camagüey (13-11), Artemisa and Matanzas (12-12), in the first positions.

Santiago de Cuba (11-13), La Isla (8-11), Sancti Spíritus and Villa Clara (10-14), Mayabeque and Holguín (9-15), Guantánamo and Cienfuegos (8-16) close the table.

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