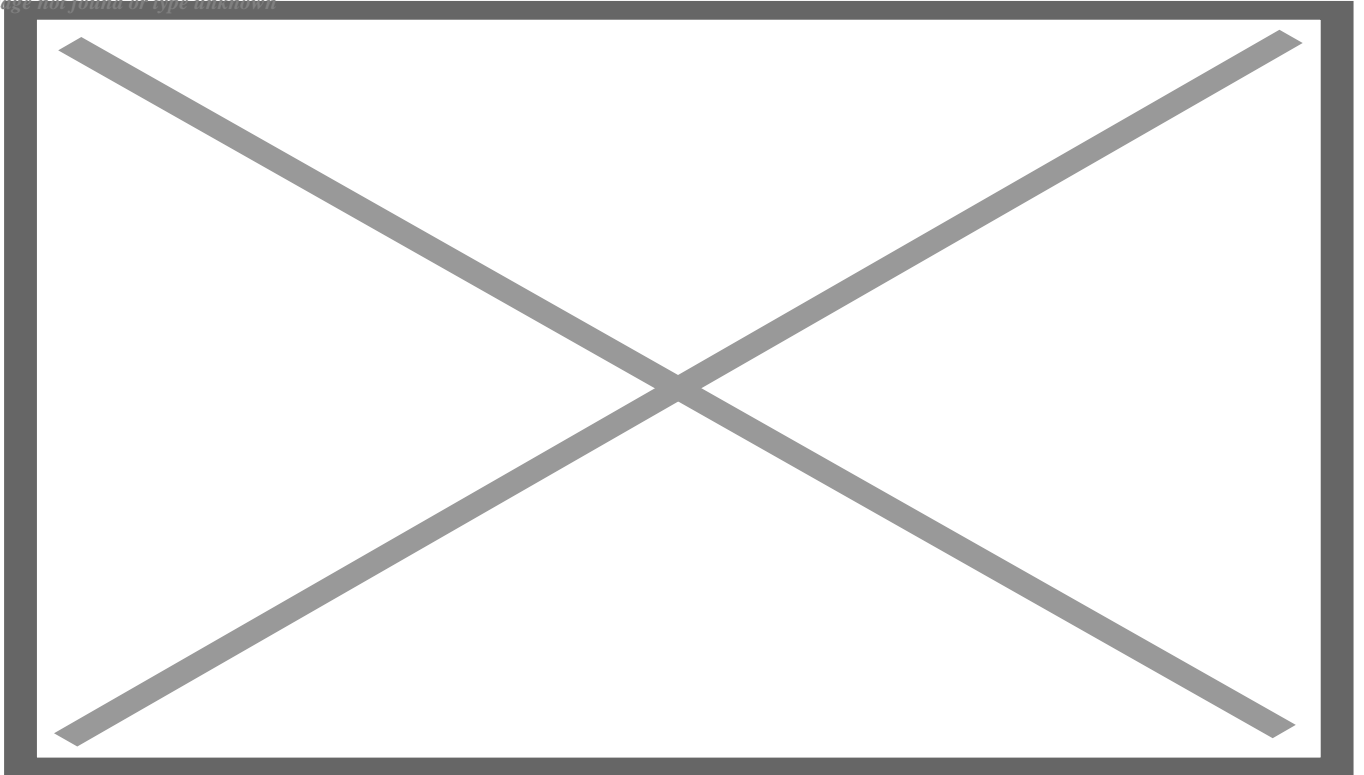


Villa Clara continues on a roll in the National Baseball Series

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Ariel Pestano Jr.

Havana, May 15 (ACN)--Supported by their pitchers, the Leopardos of Villa Clara silenced the leaders Vegueros of Pinar del Río in their own Capitán San Luis stadium and extended their winning streak to six games.

Ramón Moré's oranges won with a final score of 5-1, in a challenge where rookie Cristian Rojas pitched two thirds of the game with total dominance and barely allowed a run on a home run by also debutant Lester Benítez.

Pedro Manuel Castillo took care of the rest and kept the plate doors closed with only two hits allowed to record his fourth save of the contest.

Jenier Álvarez allowed all opposing scores (one unearned) in seven innings of work and was defeated for the first time in this National Series after accumulating five wins.

Ariel Pestano Jr. excelled with the ball by hitting two runs and a home run to drive a trio of runs. Yariel Duque hit an RBI single at the end of the ninth inning and the Crocodiles of Matanzas left the Lumberjacks of Las Tunas lying on the grass of Victoria de Girón with a score of 2-1.

It was the fourth consecutive defeat for the current national champions and the fourth consecutive success for the Yumurinos, who became more established in the classification zone.

Noervys Entenza had a quality seven-inning outing where, despite allowing nine hits and giving away three walks, he barely allowed a run, but the credit went to Armando Dueñas by getting six outs, four by strikeout.

Anier Pérez, with a good rescue effort of 3.2 innings with only one unearned run, his record, suffered the setback.

At their home in Mártires de Barbados, the Alazanes de Granma did take advantage of the day and came within three lines of the leaders by knocking out the Hurricanes of Mayabeque 14-1.

Alfredo Despaigne reaffirmed himself as the tournament's top home run hitter by hitting his 15th ball out of the park, in addition to driving in four runs. In the 16-hit attack, Raico Santos went 4-for-4 and Osvaldo Abreu went 3-for-5, both with doubles included and a couple of RBIs.

Lismay Ferrales pitched the seven acts that the match lasted to get the credit and the only score he allowed was dirty on his account. The Leones de Industriales beat the Camagüeyan Toros 5-3 and made a catlike jump in the standings to fourth place.

Pavel Hernández won the match after working two thirds of the game with three lines allowed and Fher Cejas saved him by getting six outs, four of them fanning rivals.

Roberto Álvarez hit a trio of singles and drove a teammate to the plate, within a lineup that hit 11 hits. The loss was suffered by starter Yusmel Velázquez, who remained on the mound the entire route.

After eight losses in a row, the Pirates of La Isla defeated the Tigres de Ciego de Ávila 5-2 and dropped them from the fourth place of the campaign.

César Vega drove in four runners with two singles and Jeffrey Pérez one with three hits and a double included. They could only score a couple of runs on Eric Valenzuela in 6.2 innings of work and he won the game, saved by Kevin Baños, who got the last seven outs.

In other matches, Artemisa had Holguín 9-8 with Yuniesky García's sixth success, Sancti Spíritus' Santiago de Cuba 2-1 despite connecting six hits less than its opponents and Guantánamo left Cienfuegos on the field 5-4 thanks to a ticket with full pillows.

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