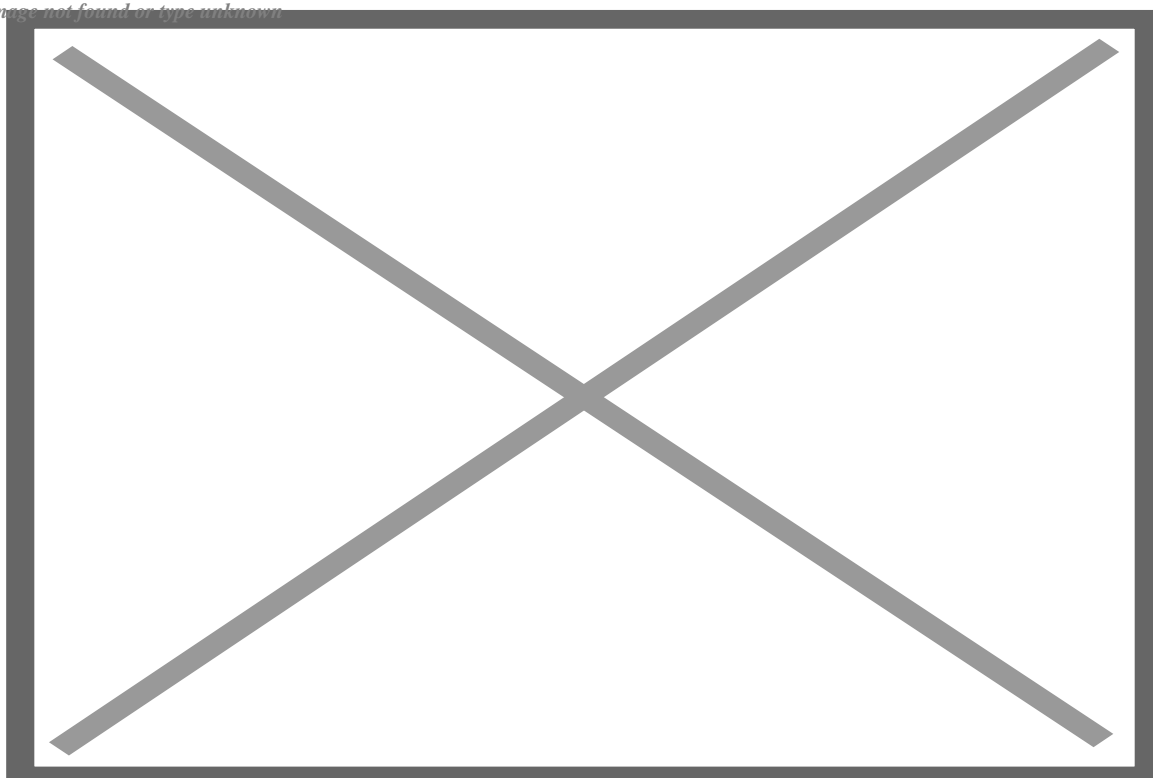


Leñadores retains national baseball crown

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Leñadores maintain national title

Las Tunas, July 28 (JIT) - With a decisive five-run rally in the eighth inning, Leñadores de Las Tunas defeated Vegueros de Pinar del Río 6x1 today and became the champion of the 63rd National Baseball Series.

Mentor Abeyci Pantoja's team won four games and only conceded one to its rival from Pinar del Río, to retain the crown won last season, when it defeated Industriales (4-0) in the final.

The close game was tied 1-1 in the decisive inning, as both teams were unproductive offensively. The connections with runners on base disappeared -Pinar left 11 and Las Tunas 9-, and the pitchers were able to "walk" the game.

Then the Leñadores registered their defining scores by hitting five hits, including a home run by designated hitter Jean Lucas Baldoquín with two teammates in circulation, before a change by left-

handed reliever Raudel Lazo.

The third victory of the tournament went to right-hander Rodolfo Díaz, who pitched a solid five innings of relief, giving up four hits and no tickets.

"I knew I was going to pitch and I prepared my pitches well. But the most important thing was my concentration in the face of each batter," Diaz told JIT.

This is the third crown for the Leñadores Tuneros, who had previously won the 58th and 62nd national series.

At the conclusion of the game, the first three places in the championship were awarded to Las Tunas, Pinar del Río and Granma. The Tunas catcher and starter Yosvani Alarcón was also recognized as the Most Valuable Player of the post-season.

The award for the best umpire went to Leonel García from Villaclareño.

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