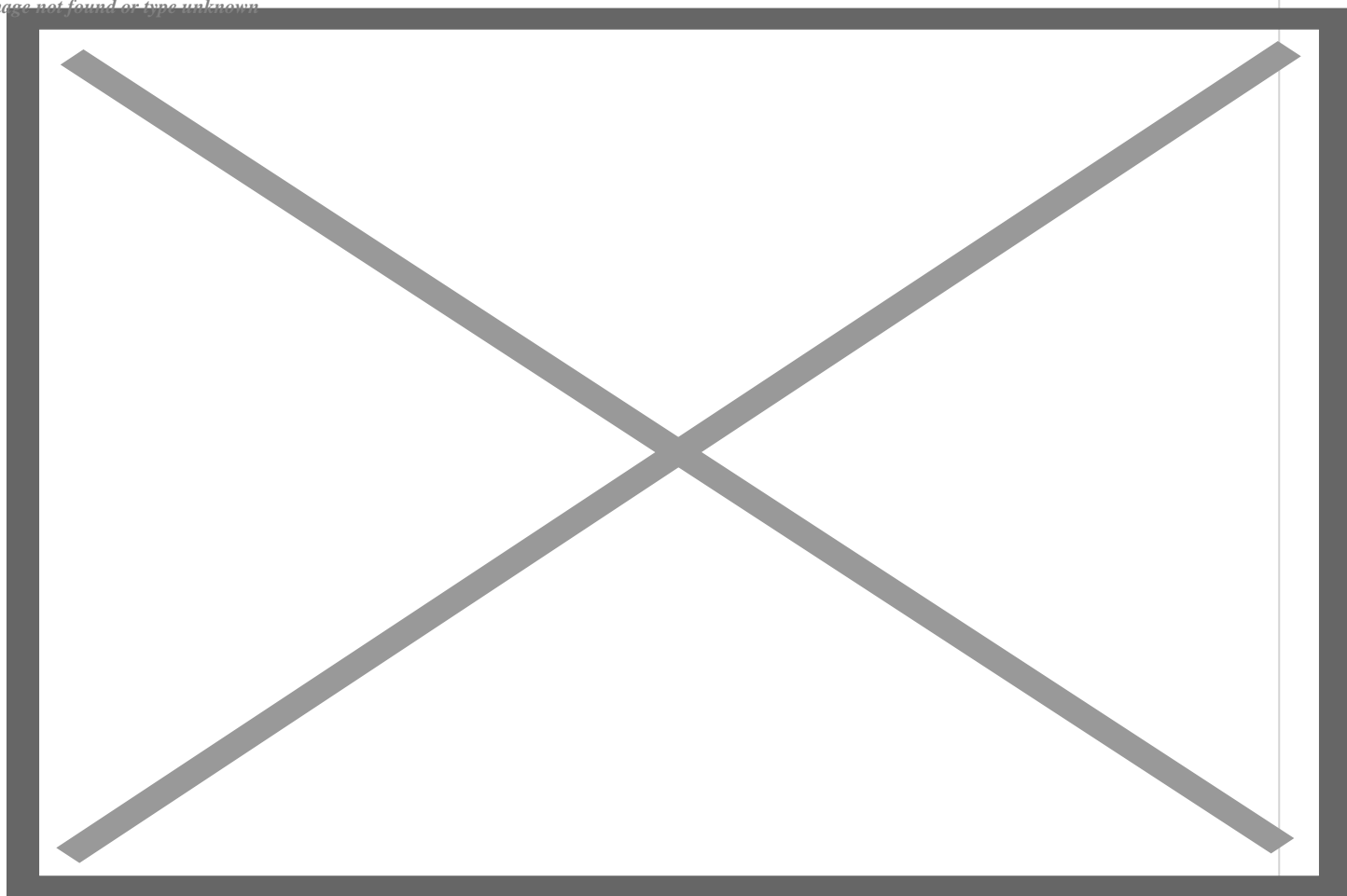


Santiago exhibits winning streak and top in baseball in Cuba

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Havana, February 8 (RHC)-- Santiago de Cuba will play today against Villa Clara, following its streak of four consecutive victories and the top of the 61st edition of the National Series, the main baseball show on the island.

The Avispas santiagueras, leaders of the championship thanks to eight wins and two losses, will continue as home club and will receive the Azucareros, fifth in the standings with five wins and four losses, at the

Guillermón Moncada Stadium.

After completing the sweep against Cienfuegos (12-0), the team led by Eriberto Rosales will depend on the right-handed Pedro Portuondo, who will be looking for his first smile in the campaign after an opening game without definition.

On the other side, Villa Clara's coaching staff will give the first ball to Javier Mirabal, winless in two games started and 11 chapters of performance.

The fifth sub-series, scheduled until Thursday, includes among its attractions the match of the current holder Granma (5-5) against the second place of the classification Mayabeque (7-2); meanwhile, Las Tunas (4-6) will face Pinar del Rio (5-5) and Ciego de Avila (7-3) will face Industriales (4-5), always in the fields of the mentioned in the first term.

Runner-up Matanzas (6-3) will travel to the Calixto García stadium to face Holguín (3-7) in search of resuming the winning pace and will use right-hander Noelvis Entenza; while the eastern side will send Rubén Rodríguez to the mound.

Sancti Spíritus (4-5) with two consecutive wins will host Isla de la Juventud (5-5), winless in five road games; meanwhile, Artemisa (4-5) will visit Cándido González of Camagüey (3-7) and Cienfuegos (4-6) will play against Guantánamo (3-7).

Individually, Matanzas shortstop Erisbel Arruebaruena ranks first among hitters with an average of .556 (27-VB, 15-H, 2-2B, 3-HR, 9-CI) and will take the field with the distinction of Most Valuable Player of the previous week.

In the box, Santiago right-hander Danny Betancourt has two wins without allowing any clean runs in 12 innings and two thirds of work; Joel Mojena from Granma accumulates three victories and left-hander Yoanni Yera from Matanzas has 19 strikeouts.

The 61st version of the Cuban baseball classic will extend its regular schedule of 75 games until mid-May and only eight teams will reach the post-season.

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