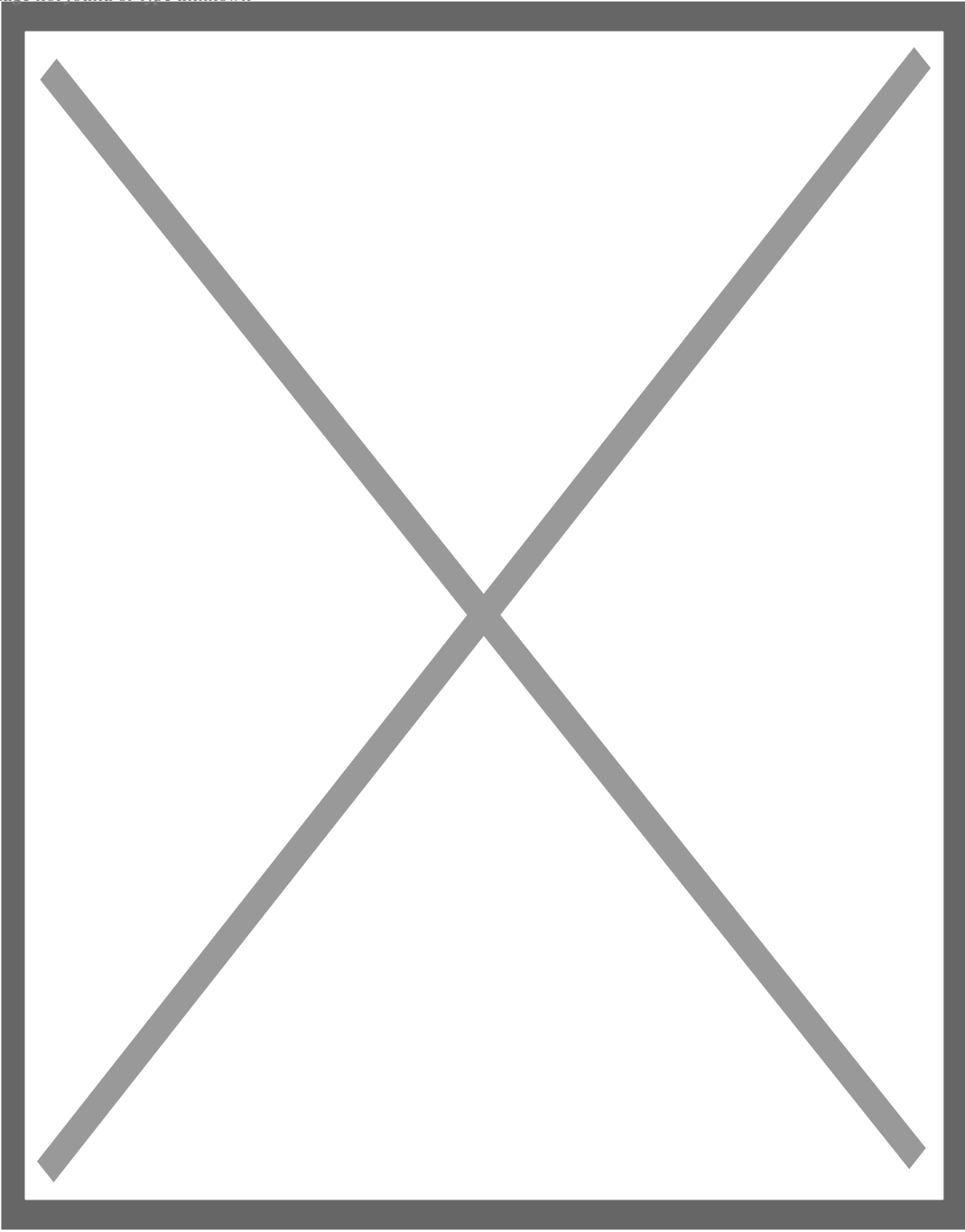


Matanzas is fifth Cuban baseball team to qualify for postseason

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Havana, May 12 (ACN) - Matanzas became the fifth team to qualify for the Cuban baseball postseason after beating Mayabeque 7-1 and sweeping the particular sub-series between the two.

On Wednesday, the qualifying phase concluded for 10 of the 16 contestant teams and now there are 11 games left to make up.

The Cocodrilos de Matanzas, who are advancing to the playoffs for the tenth time in the last 11 seasons, counted on the excellent work of left-hander Dariel Góngora, who pitched 7.0 innings with only three hits allowed.

Noelvis Entenza allowed no singles in two innings and earned the save.

Once again, center fielder Ariel Sánchez was the spark plug for the reigning national runners-up, hitting 3-3 and driving in two runs.

There were sweeps in seven games. The only one that was not swept was Ciego de Avila, which defeated the leader Sancti Spíritus 6-1.

For the Tigres avileños, the international Vladimir García obtained his second victory, with six innings at a rate of four hits, two strikeouts and without conceding a ticket.

Right-hander Yosvany Ávalos earned his tenth save and Jorge Luis Contreras hit 5-2 and drove in two runs. Both Gallos and Tigres already have tickets to the playoffs.

Meanwhile, Industriales swept La Isla 8-5, Villa Clara 8-2 against Cienfuegos, Camagüey swept Las Tunas 5-2 and Santiago de Cuba did the same by beating Guantánamo 13-4. For the Indios del Guaso, slugger Pedro Pablo Revilla hit two home runs and closed the tournament as leader, with no less than 26.

In addition, Holguín swept the monarch Granma 3-2, with Michel Cabrera's tenth win. And Pinar del Río stayed in the fight by leaving Artemisa on the field 9-8.

The Vegueros have almost assured their ticket to the postseason, because to be out, the Villa Clara team would have to win the four games they have postponed.

The qualifying phase left the experienced outfielder from Sancti Spíritus Frederich Cepeda (406) as the leader of the hitters, who was only one point ahead of veteran starter William Saavedra from Pinar de Indias.

The recovery of the 11 postponed games, necessary to know the three remaining qualifiers and the final placement of the eight that will go to the playoffs, will begin this Friday with the duels Artemisa-Industriales and Las Tunas-Mayabeque.

The other two teams that will also take part in this phase are Villa Clara and La Isla.

At the end of the regular schedule, Sancti Spíritus led the standings (45-30), followed by Las Tunas 42-31, Granma 43-32, Mayabeque 39-31, Ciego 41-34, Industriales 39-33, Matanzas 40-35, and Pinar 40-35.



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