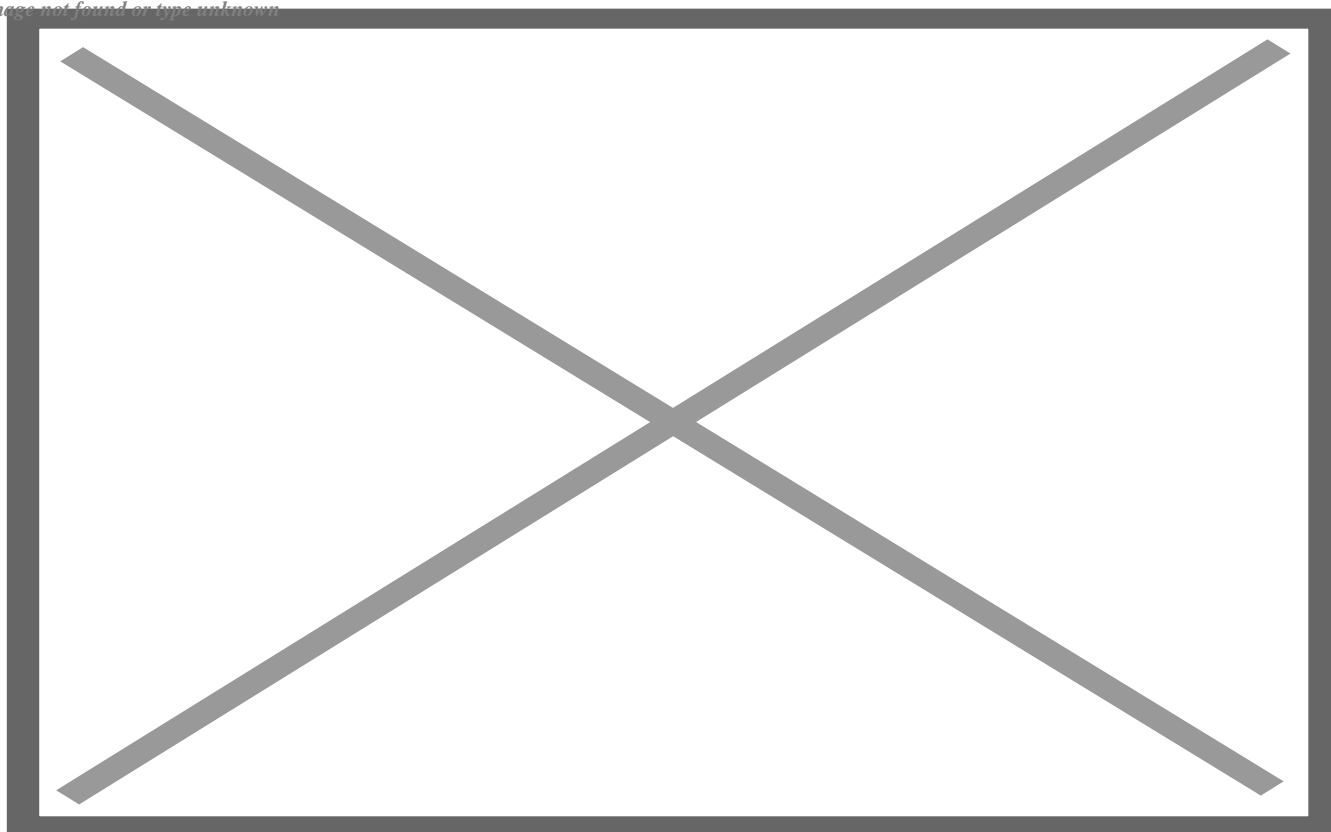


Cuban Marcel Hernandez forces the Grand Final of Costa Rican Soccer

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Marcel Hernández

San José, July 1 (PL) - A goal by Cuban striker Marcel Hernández forces a Grand Final between his team, Cartaginés, and Alajuelense to define the champion of the 2022 Clausura Tournament, of the first division of Costa Rican soccer.

In the second leg at the Alejandro Morera Soto stadium, headquarters of the Alajuelenses, Marcel - the foreigner with the most goals in Costa Rican soccer - scored last night in the 85th minute the tying goal, but decisive, because in this instance the away goal tips the balance. The first leg ended in a goalless draw.

Marcel, also the top scorer in this match, with 16 goals, celebrated his goal in a big way, since he received a lot of criticism from the local sports press that reproached him for not scoring in the relevant matches, having three challenges without scoring in this second phase (semifinal) and that ended up winning his club Cartaginés, thanks to him.

In declarations to the press at the end of the challenge, Marcel affirmed that they won an important game against a great rival and at home, when few trusted in the possibilities of Cartaginés, which has gone 82 years without winning a title in the first division of Costa Rican soccer.

The Cuban player assured that this is the most important goal of his career, as it gives life to his team, which will now define in two games -round two legs- which of the two teams will take the cup to its showcase, if Cartaginés, the fourth, or Alajuelense, the 31st.

A goal that gives the satisfaction of continuing to believe, of continuing to trust when few did, except for the loyal Cartaginés fans," he assured and emphasized "it's nice, it's nice, because I heard the comments of the journalists (who criticized him for not scoring in key games).

He highlighted the work of his teammates, which he described as exceptional, and said that they are very happy, although it is only half-happiness, because there are still two more challenges to achieve the objective. There are two more matches to come, he said.

The 12 teams participating in the Clausura Tournament played 22 matches each, in two rounds of round robin matches in the regular stage.

The top four, Alajuelense, Herediano, Cartaginés and Saprissa, went to a semifinal, which Cartaginés won to force a Grand Final that kicks off on Sunday at the Fello Meza stadium, headquarters of the Cartagineses.

After the final whistle, Cartaginés fans took to the streets to celebrate their passage to the Grand Final and the probability of winning the coveted title, which has eluded them for more than eight decades.

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