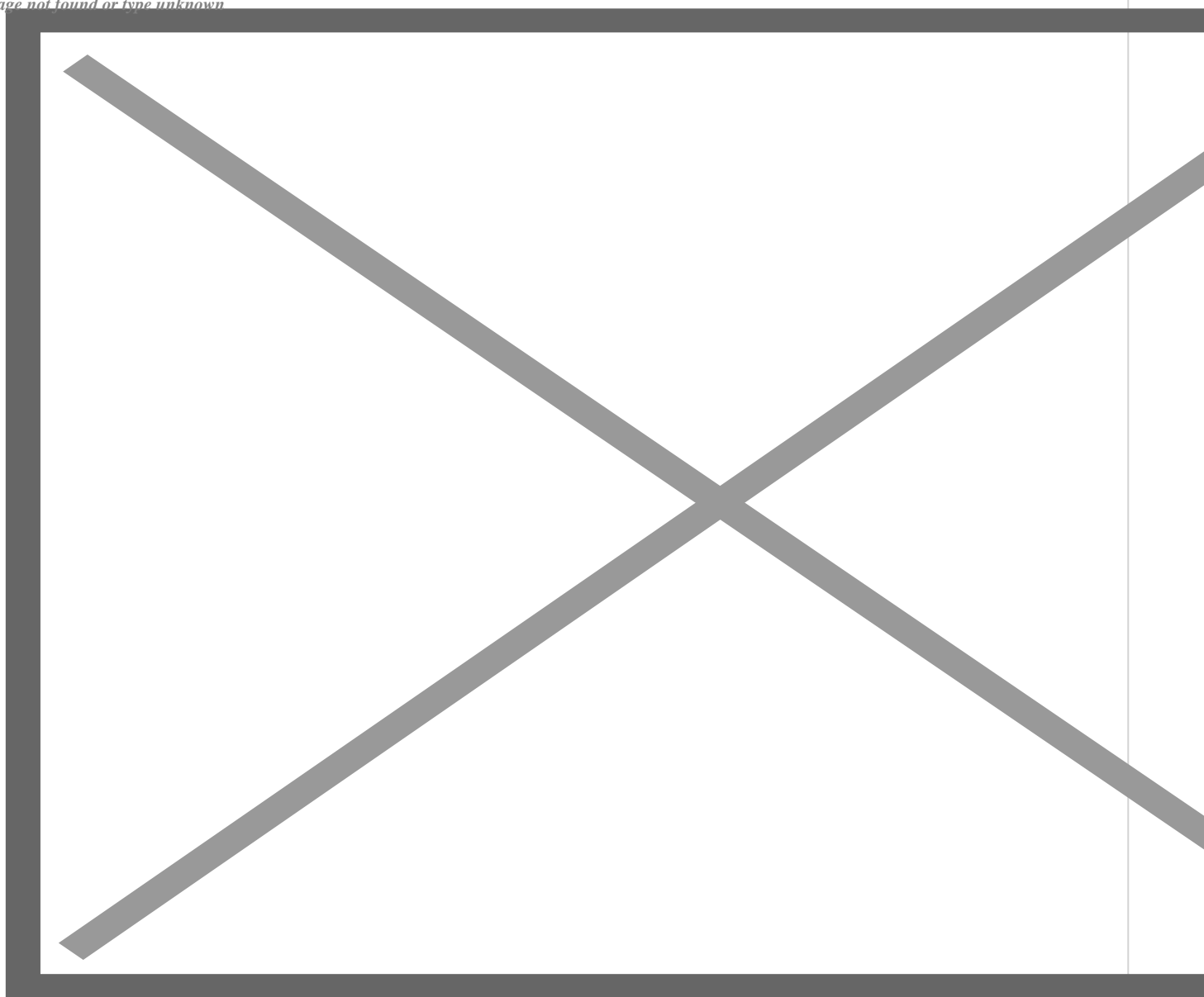


# *Portuarios one step away from the title*

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**Photo: Jorge Camarero**

By Orlando González Cruz

Havana, January 18 (RHC)-- The Portuarios team came one step away from winning the crown of the first Elite League of Cuban Baseball (LEBC) by defeating Agricultores in the fifth game of the final play-off.

In a crowded Nelson Fernández stadium, Carlos Martí's disciples took the lead in the second inning when they scored a four-run run against Pavel Hernández, the starter of the local team, but the Portuarios have shown throughout the tournament that they know how to overcome adversity and scored two in that inning with a home run by Jorge Alomá with a teammate in circulation. In the bottom of the third, they added four more and two more in the fourth, coincidentally all of them on home runs with one on board.

First, Dennis Laza responded to the trust placed in him by Michael González and got out of his bad offensive moment; then, Yasiel Santoya and, finally, Yasniel González. Other outstanding at-bats were Oscar Valdés (5-3) and Rangel Ramos (4-3).

On the other hand, Marcos Ortega, who came to Hernández's rescue, pitched a great ball and only allowed one run to the fearsome Eastern artillery (in the ninth inning).

Precisely, Ortega told us about his excellent work as a pitcher after the win: "I relied on the control of the pitches and on having good commands". The save point went to Juan Xavier Peñalver, while Alejandro Meneses took the loss.

Now the Agricultores are obliged to win all the remaining games of the play-off, since the final series is three games to one, in favor of the Portuarios who, if they win this Thursday, would be the champions of the LEBC and the representatives of Cuba in the upcoming Caribbean Series "Gran Caracas 2023", which will take place in Venezuela from February 2 to 10 next year.

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