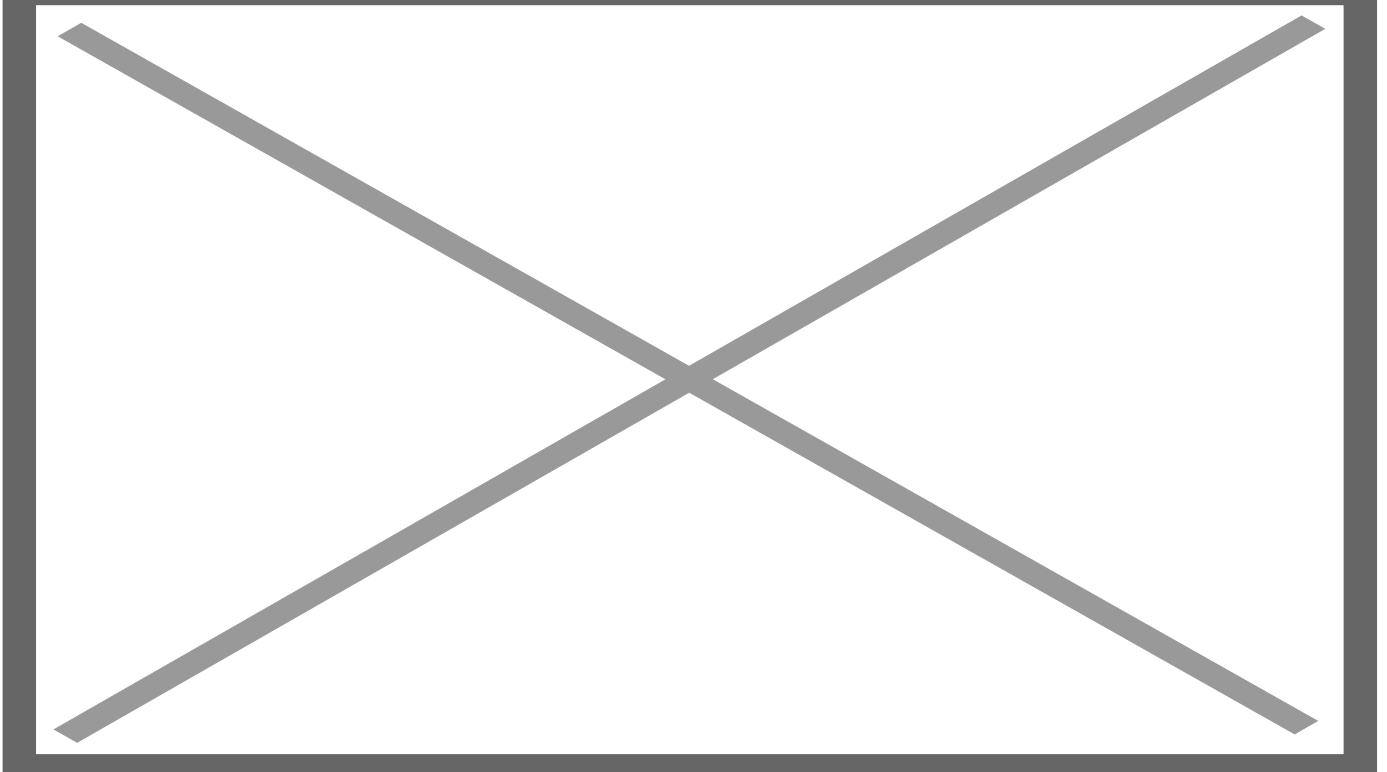


Ariel Martinez hits first home run with Nippon Ham

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Ariel Martinez

Havana, April 27 (ACN)-- Cuban Ariel Martinez hit his first home run of the season and a single in four innings, towed two runs and was vital in the Nippon Ham Fighters' 6-3 victory over the Orix Buffaloes in the Japanese Professional Baseball League.

In the Pacific League and at the Es Con Field of Hokkaido, the matancero, who had only been able to add one hit in his last three games, raised his average to .217 and his total of runs batted in to five, something that was eagerly awaited by the directors of the club, which now occupies the last place in its zone (7-15).

In another game of the day, Cuban Ridel Martínez continued his dominance from the mound and earned his seventh save of the year after allowing a runless hit in one inning of relief in the 6-3 victory of the Chunichi Dragons over the Hiroshima Carp at Mazda Stadium.

The speedy right-hander from Pinar del Río, who added three strikeouts to his personal tally, left his effectiveness at 0.00 and equaled the Central League leader in saves. The Dragons are in last place in their league with a negative 8-11 record.

And at the Pay Pay Dome in Fukuoka, the SoftBank Falcons defeated the Rakuten Eagles 4-2. In this win, Cuban left-handed reliever Liván Moinelo pitched a perfect inning of relief to improve his effectiveness to 1.80.

The Falcons, who no longer have the services of Cubans Alfredo Despaigne and Yurisbel Gracial, are fourth in the Pacific League standings (10-8).

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