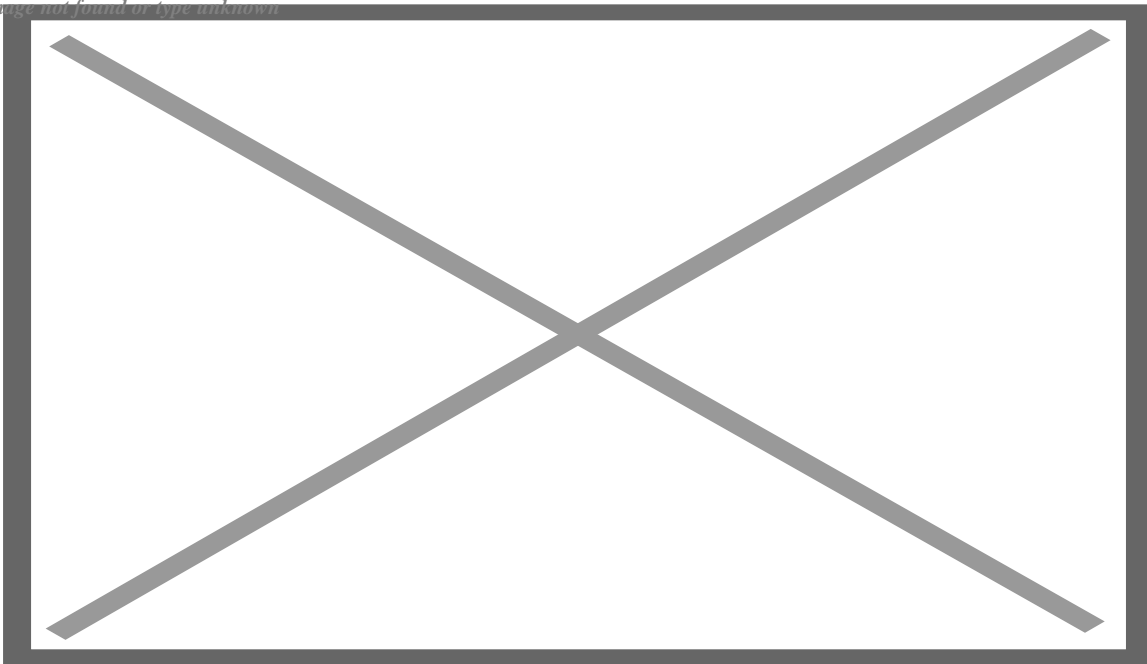


Capitalinos almost sits on Cuba's basketball throne

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Capitalinos

Havana, May 22 (JIT) - Almost anything is possible in sports. The most unsuspected feats make for rich anecdotes.

Perhaps that is what Santiago de Cuba is clinging to after Capitalinos beat them on the road for the second consecutive time in the final of the Men's Superior Basketball League 2023.

Once again, the home team had to overcome a considerable advantage, this time from the first quarter, which resulted in a comfortable 28-20 for the Havana team.

The difference at times reached 11 points, but the Falcons managed to overcome it and evened it up to 59 points each side. It all started with a 31-30 favorable to them in the second period.

They also won the third period (19-18), but the amount was insufficient to maintain the possibility of reaching the Ramón Fonst Multipurpose Hall of this capital city with a tie.

The defense on the boards seemed impossible and this gave the visitors second and third opportunities to score at key moments. The game was going uphill for the home team again and again.

The physical wear and tear also took its toll on the psychological side and it seemed impossible to take advantage of the eastern side, so much so that it was.

The defense in the paint by Reinier Muñiz and the huge difference in the scoreboard forced the locals to shoot from the three-point line. And there, the overwhelming lack of success gave the visitors another opportunity to get away on the board.

Suffice it to say that out of 25 attempts barely three went in the rival hoop. That compiled an anemic 12% of effectiveness against 27% of the rivals, an excessively wide gap.

Esteban Martínez was once again the offensive standard-bearer for the Santiagueros with 24 points. However, the free throw line was an agony for him, as he missed five of his seven shots.

Pedro Roque, of Capitalinos, made five baskets, but only one from the perimeter. He led the winners because he took advantage of seven of the eight free throws made.

The last quarter of the game showed the Santiago debacle. The game was broken and the aspirations to equalize the play offs to get more life to the headquarters of their contenders.

An improper harvest of this level left them with only four points in the last 10 minutes of the last period. The Havana players scored 18 and won 94-76.

It is never advisable to anticipate events, so announcing the failure of the Indomitos could turn into a fiasco if we give the benefit of confidence to a team that had an excellent tournament.

Nevertheless, with the final series 2-0, Capitalinos sits on the throne waiting for the crown to fall of its own weight, with three opportunities at home to win it.

For the Falcons, the only thing left to do is to cling to the epic. Only a feat will save them from being at the gates of the title.

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