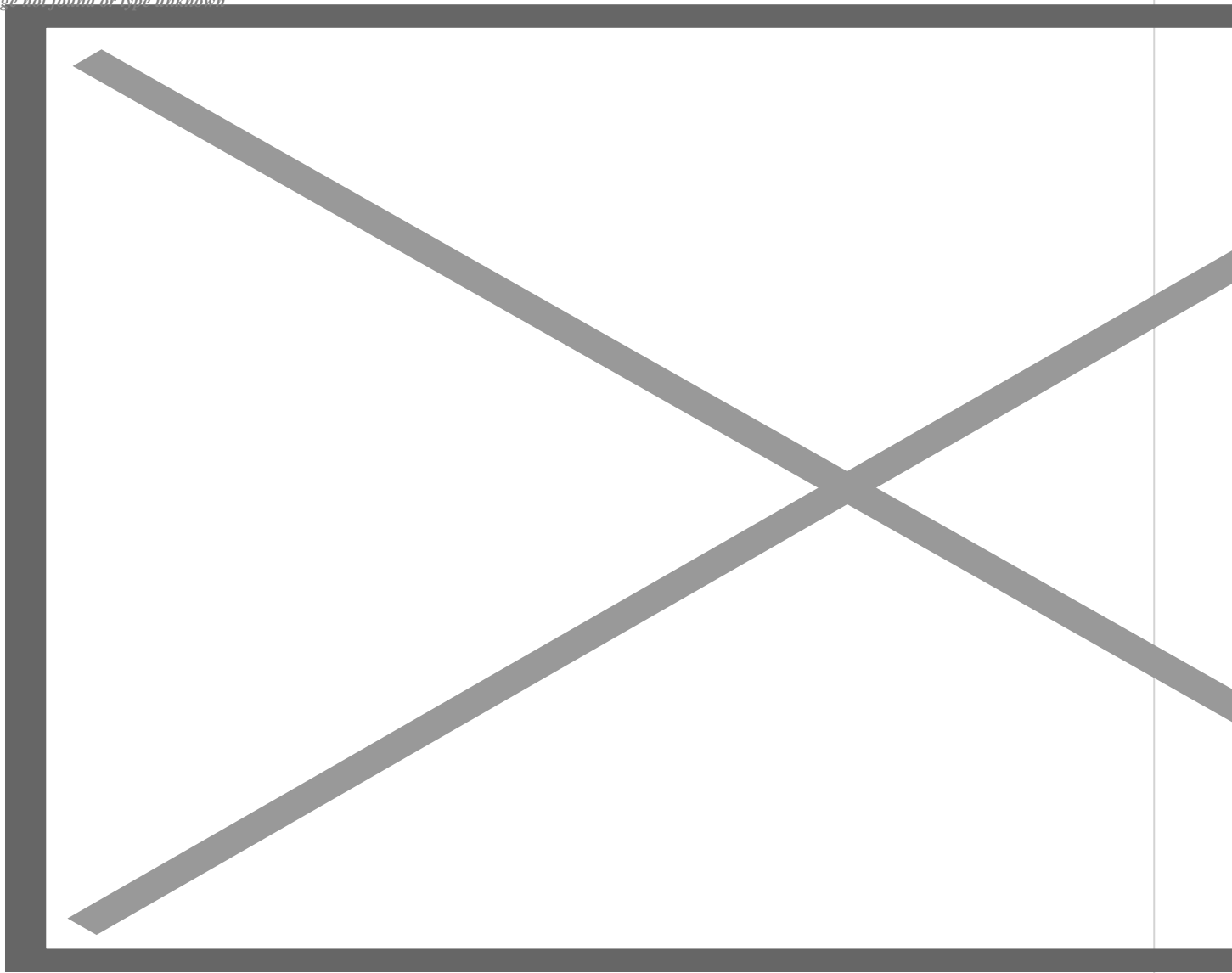


Avispas will depend on an Olympic champion in Cuban baseball semifinals

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Santiago de Cuba, July 31 (PL) - The Eastern Wasps will seek today to even the playoffs against Industriales with a victory that will force the seventh and final clash in the semifinal of the Cuban baseball tournament.

The Santiago team will depend on Olympian Danny Betancourt, winner of the third game, while the Blue Jays will once again hand the ball to young Silvano Hechavarría, loser of that game.

Considered the classic of classics due to the historical rivalry between the two teams, the match attracted a large audience in the five games played in this city, the second most important in the country, and in Havana, where more than 20,000 fans attended.

The Leones won a couple of times as visitors, but the santiagueros won twice in the emblematic Latinoamericano stadium of the capital of the island.

With the 3-2 score in their favor, the Blue and Whites will play today focused on achieving the fourth success that will guarantee them to dispute the title against Las Tunas, winner against Matanzas in the other semifinal.

It will be the 31st game between the two teams in the playoffs, whose balance favors Industriales by a narrow margin of 16-14.

Although they are the biggest winners of titles in the history of the Cuban national series, Industriales (12) and Santiago de Cuba (eight) have not reached the final for more than 10 years.

The Avispas last played in the playoff for the crown in 2008, when they defeated Pinar del Río by a 4-0 shutout, while the Leones lost in silver in 2012 when they fell victim to Ciego de Ávila in five games.

Industriales will try to avoid a seventh challenge to avoid the ghost of the 1998-1999 tournament final.

In that series, the Azules, managed as now by Guillermo Carmona, reached the sixth game with a 3-2 lead and were overturned by the Avispas at the Latin American Park in Havana.

The game is scheduled for 18:00, local time. In case the series is tied, the match will be played on Tuesday at the same time.

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