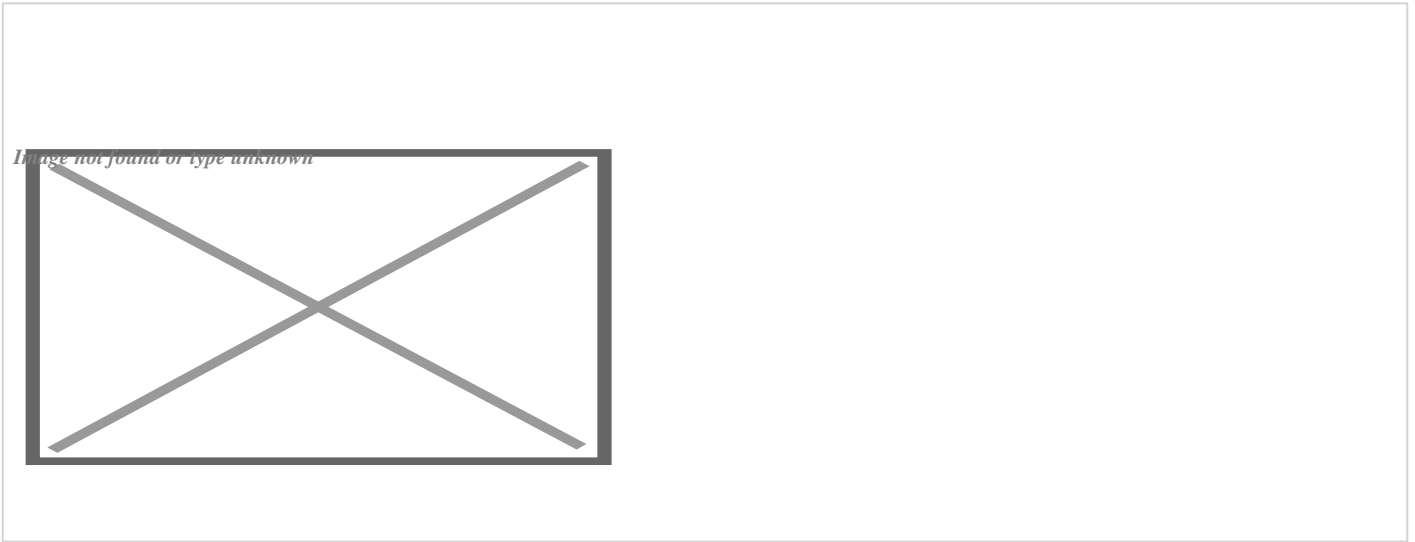


Crocodiles bite Lumberjacks at ease and take first place in the playoffs



By Orlando González Cruz.

Havana, January 7 (RHC) -- The Cocodrilos de Matanzas "bit" the Leñadores de Las Tunas at ease in the beginning of the semifinals of the second elite league of Cuban baseball and took the victory at their home ground of Victoria de Girón by a 12-0 knockout.

The Tunero pitchers could do nothing to contain the strong artillery of the Matanzas, not even one of the most dominant pitchers of the qualifying stage, left-hander Dariel Góngora, who could not do himself justice on this occasion and had to be substituted in the second chapter with seven runs on his record.

In the opposite trench, the also sinister Yoennis Yera was in great shape and was able to preserve the comfortable advantage offered by his teammates. Yera worked five innings, allowed only one hit, struck out three and gave up one run to deserve the first smile of the postseason.

From the very beginning of the game, Matanzas' offense was well adjusted, Yurisbel Gracial hit a home run with two runners on, giving his team a three-run advantage. In the second inning, the scoreboard was already out of combat, after the entire lineup of the Crocodiles paraded with home runs by Andrys Perez, Yordanis Samon and the former Boston Red Sox, Rusney Castillo.

Precisely, it is worth mentioning as a curious fact the presence of three players with Major League experience in the starting lineup of the same team. This is an unusual fact in the Cuban postseason since the emergence of the National Series.

The Matanzas added a run in the third and another in the fourth chapter with Castillo's second complete game hit of the night.

On Sunday, these teams will meet again in the second game of the play off. Meanwhile, the other semifinal series will begin at the 26 de Julio stadium in Artemisa, with the duel between the Cazadores and the Leones de Industriales.

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