

Las Tunas reborn and Artemisa on the verge of sweeping the Elite Baseball League semifinals

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Havana, January 11 (RHC).- Leñadores de Las Tunas evened their semifinal series against Matanzas in the II Elite League of Cuban Baseball, while Cazadores de Artemisa put Leones de Industriales one step away from elimination by beating them 2-1 to put the series 3-0 in their favor.

Prior to the Industriales-Artemisa clash at the Latin American Stadium in Havana, Cooperstown Hall of Fame member, Cuban Tony Oliva, threw out the pitch amidst cheers and applause, in an unprecedented event for the Cuban baseball championships.

One out away from putting the series to a matthe point, Matanzas' closer Armando Dueñas gave out a pair of tickets and allowed a run through the middle of the field that generated the valid blunder to sensationally flip the scoreboard.

The defense of the Crocodiles had also failed in the seventh inning. What should have been a zero ended in two runs, with which the Lumberjacks were momentarily one run away from the clinch.

In that act, Roberto Baldoquín was left alive after a tame connection by the shortstops, when Yordanis Samón did not catch the throw in the initial. Then, Danel Castro and Yosvani Alarcón hit towering hits.

For Danel it was his 2,499th lifetime hit. Many will be watching his every at-bat tomorrow, because with another hit he will become the first baseball player with 2,500 in the Island's tournaments.

The veteran of 29 national campaigns had a leading role in the closing of the game, when he took the first ticket that produced the sensational final, with which the match was embraced with two wins on each side.

The play that left the Crocodiles bewildered on the field, while their rivals celebrated a success literally taken out of the freezer, allowed Yosvani Alarcón to score from first base without the ball going to the gardens to settle the score.

Reliever Keniel Ferraz (3.2IP, 2H, 2K) controlled the powerful Matanzas artillery and signed the victory, despite the fact that starter Alejandro Meneses walked more than five innings and allowed three undeserved runs.

The outcome spoiled the work of the pitching tandem of Renner Rivero and Frank Luis Medina, who left the game with an advantage. Of the seven runs scored between the two teams, only one was clean on the score sheet.

This Thursday, one of the two teams will take the lead in the series, which will be decided at the Victoria de Girón Park in Matanzas on the weekend, when one of them reaches four wins.

Meanwhile, the Cazadores de Artemisa have the chance to complete the sweep today against Industriales in one of the semifinals of the Cuban elite baseball league.

The sensational 2-1 win last night put the series 3-0 in their favor and in the history of the island's baseball post-seasons no team has ever reversed such a situation.

In a game marked by the historic fact that former American Major League Baseball and Cooperstown Hall of Famer, Cuban Tony Oliva, made a symbolic courtesy pitch, the Cazadores came from behind in the ninth inning with towering home runs by Dennis Laza and José Antonio Jiménez against closer and loser Juan Xavier Peñalver.

The game was 1-0 in favor of the Leones, who used five pitchers to protect that minimal difference and look for a success that would give a different twist to the playoff series.

For the last inning, the exceptional Liván Moinelo, one of the aces of the SoftBank Falcons bullpen in the main Japanese professional league, took the ball, to whom Cristian Rodríguez hit a jit through the short field and a throwing error complicated the situation.

Then the runner advanced a base on a sacrifice play and with the infield Luis Vicente Mateo delivered a grounder to third that served as a double play, as Rodriguez threw himself to suicide dive for the rubber, a

throw that provided the 27th out of the game.

The play generated a lot of controversy among the fans who attended the Latinoamericano stadium and the debates are still going strong in some digital social networks.

Both teams will return this Thursday to the field of the mythical baseball park of the Cuban capital, but the mentors still had doubts about the pitchers they will use.

Las Tunas dramatically tied the other series with Matanzas at two wins apiece, which will live today its fifth game with the same duel of the first day: Yoannis Yera and Dariel Góngora.

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