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Review After the Elite League

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi  
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The main legacy of the Third Elite League of Cuban baseball was the unexpected triumph of Ciego de Ávila, which in turn brought the Las Tunas Leñadores dynasty to a screeching halt.

But beyond the sporting result, it's important to assess a tournament that has already reached its third edition and looks set to remain on the Cuban baseball calendar, first and foremost because it's needed. With all its shortcomings, which we will attempt to analyze, the need to play baseball in order to develop our talents is undeniable, and under that premise, it must be held, no matter what.

However, to truly be considered the highest-caliber tournament on the national stage, some points need to be corrected, especially logistically, because to live up to its name, it can't be a mere extension of the National Series with reinforcements.

I found it extremely striking that the stands of the Bosque Encantado stadium (by the way, it didn't even have a scoreboard) weren't even half full for the final games of the final, and I don't think this was because their team was below them.

Playing in the afternoon in this intense heat affects the players first and foremost, but also the fans. I know the economic situation is very complex, but with a slightly more professional organization, the return of night games can be achieved, even if it means using electric generators.

The many talented players we have left must have enough motivation to wear their uniforms for an event in which the best players aren't participating because it coincides with other leagues and is essentially an U-23 or development tournament.

Traditional regionalism can't be changed overnight with the franchise system, but we must approach that model in our own way, with autonomy for each team, sponsorship, recruiting children, and development in the different categories in our own academies.

It already happened this year, and it could very well happen next year, that the champion won't defend their crown, because no one knows what will happen in the next National Series.

Much more attention is needed, and this starts with the date, as it should be the event from which our best national team emerges. The tricky thing here is that for us, sometimes the most important thing is a World Cup Classic, other times the Premier 12, other times the Central American Games, and other times the Caribbean Series, and each one has different slots in the year.

Therefore, we can't think about those events because we go crazy and demand peak performances multiple times in a single season, which is neither right nor logical. We can't depend on every international tournament, and that can be avoided by granting autonomy like clubs in the rest of the world.

The solutions are by no means simple, but we have to start building things up now.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSi Translation Staff**

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