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**Comebacks in Cuban baseball**

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi  
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I was tired of witnessing how every movement within Cuban baseball involved our players just leaving, either by defections, or contracts associated or not with the Cuban Baseball Federation

Luckily, the tide has turned in the last couple of years. And we all have witnessed some major comebacks to our main sports show, on the verge of boredom due to the lack of star players.

Matanzas was the forefather of this with the calling of Erisbel Arruebarruena, who even returned to the National Team after spending years playing abroad, reaching the MLB. But luckily, other renowned faces are already seen in our ballparks.

The most recent of all is Pinar del Rio's player Alexei Ramirez, who spent 17 years without playing baseball here in Cuba. And he is back for the 63rd National Series of Baseball with his beloved team.

The now first baseman have livened up to the expectation. He has

matched up his performance on the field to the media impact of his return. He played pretty well against Artemisa and then against Industriales. But now it is time for the icing on the cake: he will play baseball in his home ballpark: Capitan San Luis.

At 42 years old, six without playing baseball, Alexei boasts nine seasons in the Major Leagues, with two Silver Bats awards and one All-Star Game.

The long standing ovation he received in the half-empty Latinoamericano Stadium will be multiplied several times in his home country.

Despite being away for so long, he returned to play as a regular player fulfilling a promise to a close family member, who wanted to see him in the green uniform again.

The truth is that these types of players are key not only because of their performance, but also their leadership and are of great support for managers, because he has seen firsthand the best baseball in the world and he knows all the insides of the game.

He has stated in several interviews that he comes to the national series to share his experience and help in whatever way he can.

The best evidence was that the team captain, Juan Carlos Arencibia, did not hesitate for a second to cede his number 2 of his jersey so that Alexei would not feel weird wearing another number in the uniform.

We can only hope that he remains healthy enough so that he can contribute to the team and continue bringing fans to all the stadiums, beyond his key role towards a possible qualification for postseason, likelier this year thanks to his presence.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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