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## ***Los Eternos Rivales Habana Y Almendares***

Baseball is not Cuba's national pastime; it is its national passion. Cubans are said to breathe baseball, eat baseball, and excrete baseball. While many young Cuban-Americans are passionate about baseball and worship Cuban idols like Rafael Palmeiro, Jose Conseco, and Livan Hernandez, few of them know the history of Cuban baseball and the fiercest rivalry in all of Latin American baseball: that between Habana and Almendares.

On December 20, 1878, while Cuba was still a Spanish colony, the Cuban Professional Baseball League was established. Nine days later, the first game between these ball clubs, the Habana Reds and the Almendares Blues, was played. The game marked the beginning of an eighty-three year rivalry of epic proportions. Only the Cuban Revolution was strong enough to put an end to Los Eternos Rivales: Habana y Almendares.

This paper presents an overview of the Habana-Alamendares rivalry and its impact on Cuban popular culture. In addition it explores the rivalry's connections with American Organized Baseball in the 1940s and the legendary figures of their respective managers Miguel Angel Gonzalez and Adolfo Luque.