

# *Sport News Roundup June 5*

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## **Volleyball**

The *International Volleyball Federation (FIVB)* paid tribute to recently deceased Cuban coach Eugenio George, recognized as the creator of *Total Volleyball*.

“American football is symbolized by Vince Lombardi, basketball by Phil Jackson, soccer by Rinus Michels, and volleyball Eugenio George,” said the FIVB at its website.

“*Las Morenas del Caribe*” both spectacular and unique, were the best example of gender equality in sports. As a coach, Eugenio George was always victorious, and now he will remain immortal, adds the note.

George will be remembered as a fiercely intelligent man, a leader in the sporting venues and a gentleman away from the court, says the article.

George, his leadership and revolutionary style were the key to the birth of the Cuban School of Volleyball, said the chronicle.

The Cuban star coach died last Saturday at the age of 81, victim of a cancer that he had suffered for months. For his merits, including several Olympic and world titles, he was selected by the FIVB as the *Best Coach* of female volleyball athletes in the 20th century, and was included in the *Volleyball Hall of Fame* since 2005.

## Athletics

Cuban pole vaulter Yarisley Silva, Olympic silver medalist at *London-2012* and champion at the indoor world games in Sopot this year, is a standout among athletes at the *Great Athletics Draw* to be held in Rome, organizers confirmed.

Silva is 2nd in her discipline in the *Diamond League* with 2 points and could take the lead if she wins the rally, a tribute to the Italian former sprinter Pietro Mennea.

In absence of the Greek Nikoleta Kyriakopoulou, leading the standings with 4 units, and German Kristina Gadschiew (1 point), Silva has an open door to take the top of the ladder.

However, the main rivals of the Cuban athlete will be the Brazilian Fabiana Murer, world champion at *Daegu-2011*, and the German Silke Spiegelburg winner of the Diamond last year.

Parallel, in the women's 800 meters, Cuban runner Sahily Diago, 18, leads the world ranking of the Season with 1.57.74 min., and will debut in the *Diamond League*. Diago broke the youth record held by Ana Fidelia Quirot, world champion in *Gothenburg-1995* and *Athens-1997*, and Olympic bronze *Atlanta-1996*, on May 25th at the *Barrientos Memorial* held in Havana, and was part of the 4x400 relay in *London-2012* though has not competed internationally since then.

At the *Olympic Stadium* of the Italian capital, her main rival will be the Kenyan Janeth Jepkosgei, universal holder in *Osaka-2007*, and Eunice Jepkoech, number one for her victory in *Doha* and universal gold in *Moscow-2013*, and the South African, Caster Semenya, world winner in *Berlin-2009*.

Meanwhile, Cuba will participate in triple jump in both mens and womens events with Mabel Gay, Ernesto Revé and Lázaro Martínez, who adds 2 points.

Other outstanding figures include American Justin Gatlin in the 100 meters, who is coming to Rome after winning the first 2 such events in the *Diamond League* (Shanghai and Eugene).

### Javier Sotomayor

Former Cuban athlete Javier Sotomayor highlighted the role played by coach Jose Godoy, whose unexpected death frustrated the common goal of jumping 2.47 meters.

The Olympic champion in Barcelona-1992 told *Prensa Latina* news agency that with Godoy alive he would have gained at least a couple of inches closer to the world record that has held for almost 21 years (2.45).

"The idea was getting the 2.47 meters, and if Godoy had not have died, I would have reached at least the 2.46", said Sotomayor in a visit on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of this news agency.

The famous *King of Heights*, among other things, recalls that Godoy taught him to know himself and know how far he could go, and when he questioned his progress he used to say "be quiet, you're good and have a good coach".

Regarding the longevity of his world record, Sotomayor considered that Russian Ivan Ukhov and Ukrainian Bodam Bondarenko seem able to dethrone him, but that does not take his dream away.

"Since my first world record on September 8th, 1988, I knew that someday someone would jump higher than me, but for that reason I will not stop being who I am", said the also winner of the *Prince of Asturias Award-1993*.

Five-times winner of the annual survey of *Prensa Latina* to choose the *Best Athlete in Latin America*, Sotomayor acknowledges that in his time he had to compete with the best jumpers.

"To that generation I owe my records, because if I wanted to be the best I had to beat the best, and that was a motivation that I not always had", said the legendary athlete.

This meeting with Sotomayor and other sports glories is part of the initiatives of the Latin American News Agency Prensa Latina to celebrate its 55th anniversary, on June 16th.

### **Legends of Cuban Sports Highlight Role of Prensa Latina**

Several legends of Cuban sports highlighted the traditional support of news agency *PRENSA LATINA* to the Cuban sport movement.

Names of great athletes, like the one of Enrique Figuerola, Lazaro Betancourt and high jumper Javier Sotomayor, visited this agency to greet the 55th anniversary of its foundation on June 16th, 1959.

Figuerola, 1st winner of the annual survey of Prensa Latina to choose the *Best Athletes of Latin America and the Caribbean*, highlighted the great communication that always existed between athletes and journalists.

"We were always supported with statistics and information, even when we were going to compete in a country where Prensa Latina had press correspondents, we always visited your office", he added.

At the same time Sotomayor, Olympic Champion and world record holder, considered an honor to have won the poll of a news agency that contributes to highlight the successes of the Cuban sport five times.

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