

# *The Capablanca Chess clocks start to run*

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## **Capablanca Memorial**

Havana, May 3 (JIT) - A simple opening ceremony, which did not lack touches of emotion, inaugurated on Tuesday the 56th International Chess Tournament Capablanca in Memoriam 2023, at the downtown Havana Libre Hotel.

The record number of represented players was confirmed by the president of the Cuban Chess Federation, Carlos Rivero, during the gala that was attended by the Hero of the Republic of Cuba, Antonio Guerrero, and the head of Inder, Osvaldo Vento Montiller.

"We are pleased to welcome you and thank you for your support to this competition, held in difficult conditions, but with the satisfaction of having a record 29 participating countries," said Rivero as he inaugurated the event.

As is tradition, the opening night also included among its attractions the draw for the elite group, which brings together the 10 highest-ranked players among all the contestants.

Spain's Eduardo Iturrizaga, who leads the pre-qualifying ranking thanks to his 2,637 Elo points, will move white pieces this Wednesday against Omar Almeida (2,526), one of the five hosts who will compete for the crown of this group.

At the remaining tables, it will be interesting to follow the disputes between Brazil's Alexandr Fier (2,599) and the two-time champion of the island, Carlos Daniel Albornoz (2,586), and the current national runner-up Lelys Martinez (2,531) against Germany's Rasmus Svane (2,621).

In the duel between locals, the current home king, Elier Miranda (2,515), will be playing the black pieces against Luis Ernesto Quesada (2,562). The opening round program will be completed with the match between Denmark's Jonas Bjerre (2,606) and India's Raunak Sadhwani (2,627).

The color of the pieces for the first matches in the open and senior segments was also drawn. In both cases, those located in the odd numbers will start the route at the helm of the dark figures.

Two emotional moments completed the show that took place in the Solidarity Hall of the capital's tourist facility.

One of those was the congratulations sung to Vivian Ramon, the first grandmaster of Ibero-America and an indissoluble part of chess in Cuba, who celebrated her six decades of life this Tuesday. Those who have admired her talent will be able to appreciate her return to action as part of the senior group.

At the gala, the legacy of one of those who foresaw the development of the Science Game in the island was also remembered: Ernesto Che Guevara. The 95th anniversary of his birth, on June 14, is dedicated to the event of which he was a fervent promoter.

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