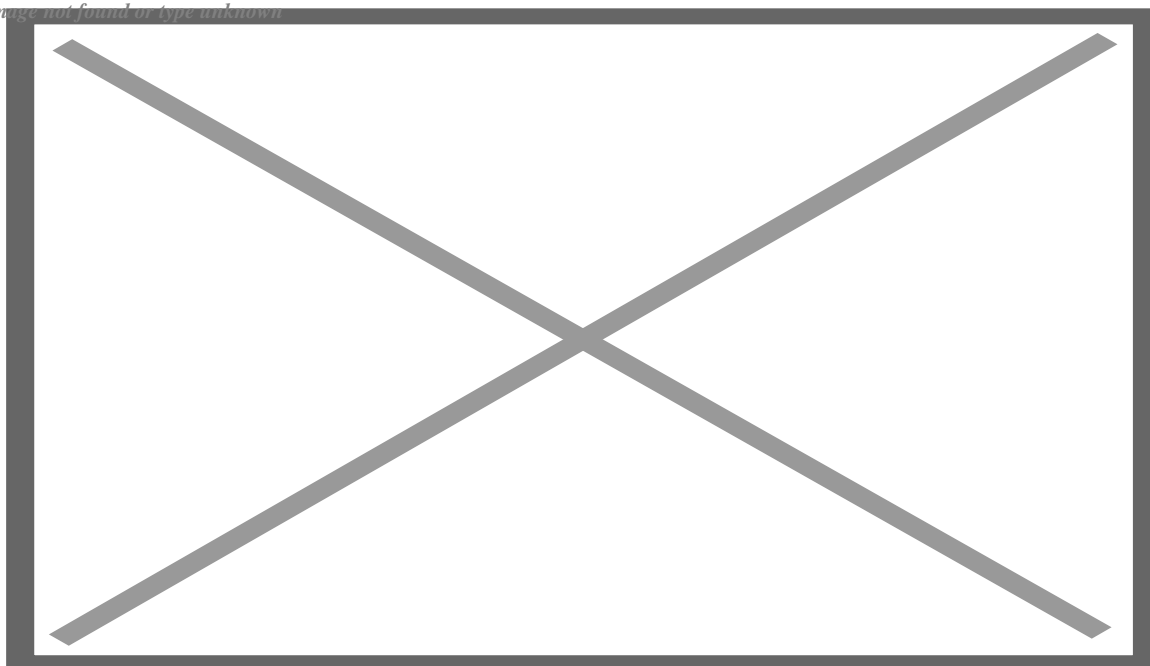


Cuban national soccer team ready for demanding schedule

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Pablo Elier Sánchez

Havana, June 7 (JIT) -Cuban soccer has important objectives in the immediate stage, including the Gold Cup in the United States, according to a press conference in the presence of directors and coaches.

In this exchange there were four points of discussion: Cuban team for the upcoming Gold Cup in the United States; friendly matches on FIFA dates against Chile and Uruguay -on June 11 and 20, respectively-, strategies and technical-tactical interests in order to participate in the CONCACAF Nations League A level, and the JOMA brand as sponsor of Cuban soccer.

Pablo Elier Sanchez, technical director of the so-called Lions of the Caribbean, said that in the upcoming matches in South America, beyond the results, it is important to see possible formations, in which there will be players who play in foreign leagues together with outstanding young players of the current Cuban tournament.

"We have called those athletes who respond to the planning and the particular circumstances, given the injuries suffered by some with responsibilities in our team," Sanchez said.

"Obviously some players were left out of the 23 who will play in the friendlies. They also have the quality to be part of the national team. We have decided on the competitive demands faced by those selected, which does not mean that those who are not included are not also very talented. On the other hand, we do not rule out any of the players who make up the long list for the Gold Cup," said the Pinar del Río coach.

Dariem Díaz, AFC head of national teams, announced the CONCACAF Nations League competitive schedule and Cuba's opponents in its Tier A group: Suriname, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica and Grenada.

Dariem explained the complicated qualification system, although it is not known which of these rivals the Cuban senior team will face, taking into account that this format does not necessarily include matches with each member of the group.

He announced that the group stage matches will take place between September and October of this year, leaving November for the quarterfinals.

Regarding the Gold Cup, he clarified that the visa process for the United States began on April 29 and is in the administrative phase at the U.S. Embassy in Cuba.

He also responded to questions about the non-call-up of players such as Marcel Hernández, about whom he explained that they have not received any communication expressing their desire to join the team.

Díaz also clarified that other players such as Jairo González, Samuel Mahlamaki and Christian Joel, with whom conversations have been held, do not present the personal documentation required by Fifa to be included in the national team.

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