

Sports News Roundup Sept 18



Wrestling

Cuban Greco-Roman wrestler, Mijaín Lopez, told local *Granma* newspaper that he intends to win every tournament between now and the *Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro-2016*.

Lopez, 130 kilo champion at the recently completed *World Wrestling Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan*, arrived home Tuesday night.

The Caribbean wrestler, five-time world champion, told reporters he had faced well prepared and very strong rivals.

"It was a high-quality tournament, but I was focused on confirming my position as best wrestler in the world after my absence in 2013 due to elbow surgery. The training was excellent and I was able to manage the matches by using imbalance as a primary resource," he said.

He also added that this medal was dedicated to his son, wife and the people of Cuba, whom he considers his confirmation.

This is the first step to continuing the pursuit of gold hereafter, at *Rio de Janeiro-2016*.

Lopez, double Olympic champion in Beijing 2008 and London 2012, described the semifinal against Russian Bilyal Makhov as his most difficult challenge.

"He is a very strong fighter, 3-time world champion in *freestyle*, therefore he reacts faster to pulls. I scored 1 point for a continued imbalance in action in the first period and that settled it," commented López.

At the World Cup, Cuban wrestlers won a title, plus a silver and 2 bronze medals, to occupy the 8th position (by nation) in the tournament which was led by Russia (6-4-5), Japan (4-2-0) Armenia (2-0-0), Iran (1-4-4), Turkey (1-3-5), Azerbaijan (1-3-3) and the United States (1-1-4).

Triple jump

Teddy Tamgho could have been excused for taking it easy after being handed a one-year ban for missing 3 drug tests.

But the world triple jump champion is doing anything but, pushing himself to the limit in a 5-week training camp in Cuba with Cuban coach Ivan Pedroso.

Tamgho tells AFP news agency he trains at Bacuranao beach, close to Havana, big droplets of sweat coursing down his face after a 45-minute training session under the watchful eye of Pedroso.

The 25-year-old reigning world champion was handed a one-year ban for missing 3 out-of-competition doping tests by the French Athletics Federation (FFA) in June, though there was no indication that he had deliberately tried to avoid the tests.

And the Parisian jumper sought a little bit of refuge in Cuba, a country passionate about sports and confessed that "Cuba is a country of athletics, in every discipline. I came to impregnate myself a little in this atmosphere," It's a school that has always fascinated me," Tamgho said.

In Cuba, Tamgho's guides are long jump legend Pedroso (9 world titles and Olympic gold medalist) and 2008 Olympic 110m hurdles champion and Dayron Robles' friend.

The two Cubans look after Tamgho, a fluent Spanish and English speaker, giving him lodging and precious words of advice. "They show me that I still have quite a lot of work to do before being able to claim to be an exceptional sportsman," said Tamgho, whose winning jump of 18.04m in the Moscow worlds was the 3rd longest of all-time.

Tamgho also confessed his friends and family had understood his decision to seek temporary refuge in Cuba while training harder for his return, but in his downtime, he basically remains peaceful and disciplined, and stayed home.

Since Tamgho's ban will be lifted on March 17, 2015, he will be defending his world title in Beijing in August 2015, where he will be facing off the current and best world rivals ever.

Basketball

Cuba's national women's basketball team traveled to Spain yesterday for a series of friendly caps in the run up to the *2014 FIBA World Championship for Women*.

The games, prior to the tournament, hosted by Turkey from Sept 27th to Oct. 5th, will be very important, since they will give them a chance to measure themselves against two strong teams, Spanish and Canadians, led by Cuban coach Alberto Zabala.

The world championship will feature 16 teams in 4 groups, with Cuba in *Group C*, along with Australia, Belarus, and South Korea.

Cuban basketball expert Dalia Henry said the team is in very good shape and trained to counteract the weak points they previously had.

Following the world tournament, Cuba will compete in the *Central American and Caribbean Games* in Veracruz, Mexico, in November.

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