

# *Sports News Roundup Nov. 12*

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## **Cuban Delegation Departs to Veracruz-2014**

The bulk of the Cuban sports delegation travels today on 3 flights to Veracruz, with a mission to reach the 1st position of the *XXII Central American and Caribbean Games* to be held in the city of Veracruz, while Xalapa, Tuxpan, Córdoba and Coatzacoalcos will act as secondary venues from the 14th-30th this month.

The large group covers 352 of the 543 athletes that make up the Cuban delegation that will compete in 34 of the 46 disciplines convened and includes stars, rookies, managers, specialists in sports medicine and sports heroes already retired, who will join the 130 Cuban athletes already training in the host country.

Tomás Herrera, director of international relations at the *National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, INDER*, said Cuban athletes may choose 329 titles from 434 sets of medals in dispute.

Cuba leads the 3rd largest delegation, only surpassed by the hosts with 713 and Venezuela with 546, and will try to get for the 10th consecutive time in history since *Panama City 1970*, not counting its absences to *San Salvador 2002* and *Mayagüez 2010*.

The Cuban delegation, consisting of 232 females and 311 males, is represented by all the provinces and the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud, has an average age of 24.7 years old, and a 2nd-year college level, of which 85% debut in this type of competition, including 49 minor contestants, and only 76 athletes repeat of previous editions.

Mijaín López, double Olympic champion and 5-times world champ, will be the flag bearer of the Cuban delegation that will parade on the 14th at the opening ceremony.

Under the slogan "*Fly Veracruz*", the gala will be attended by 30,000 spectators and with the participation of over 600 000 artists on stage, will essentially show indigenous Mexican roots, whose basic theme will be '*The Sea*'.

### **562 Foreigners Confirmed For Marabana Marathon**

A total of 562 foreign runners and over 2,000 locals have already confirmed their attendance at the *28th edition of Marabana Marathon* on Sunday in Havana, announced Carlos Gattorno, CEO of the project.

Among the visitors stands a group of over 150 Americans, benefit from a special amateur sports license issued by the U.S. Treasury Department.

According to the manager, a delegation from the *Madrid Marathon* and the representative of the *World Tour Marathon Series* also arrived in the capital.

Gattorno also confirmed the availability of all essential resources and devices for the proper completion of the grueling event, which this year pays tribute to the 495th anniversary of the founding of the town of *San Cristobal de La Habana* and the Day of Physical Education and Sports, on November 19th.

With the delivery of the dorsal signs to local runners from tomorrow at *Sports City Coliseum*, the main marathon competition in the largest of the Antilles will enter in its final organizational stage.

On November 16th at 7 am there will be the official start of *Marabana Marathon* while a day earlier will be *Maracuba*, both with exact starting point through local *Radio Reloj* radio station and the official presentation of *Marabana-2015* will be held on Friday at the *Meliá Cohiba Hotel* in the Cuban capital.

### **Cuban Ballplayer Smuggler Sentenced to 14-plus Years**

The convicted ringleader of a smuggling organization that took more than 1,000 Cubans into the U.S., some of them baseball players including Texas Rangers outfielder Leonys Martin, was sentenced Monday to more than 14 years in federal prison.

U.S. District Judge Joan Lenard rejected a request for leniency by Eliezer Lazo, whom she noted was paid \$22,000 a month through the scheme --not counting the percentages of any professional baseball contracts the players signed. Prosecutors say Martin paid the Lazo group \$1.2 million after signing with the Rangers in 2011. "That's a lot of money," the judge said.

Lazo, who is 41 years old, will begin serving the sentence after finishing an unrelated 5-year prison term for money laundering in a Medicare fraud case. In the smuggling case, he pleaded guilty in August to extortion conspiracy.

The Lazo organization smuggled Cubans by boat to Mexico for \$10,000 each, more for the baseball players, according to court documents. They would then usually travel to the U.S. border crossing at Laredo, Texas, and ask to be allowed to stay in the United States.

Under the U.S. "wet foot, dry foot" policy, Cubans who reach dry land in the U.S. are generally allowed to remain while those intercepted at sea are returned to Cuba. Assistant U.S. Attorney Ron Davidson said migrants who couldn't pay were held for ransom by armed guards, often threatened and sometimes beaten. Although Lazo himself did not participate in any violence, Davidson said he was well aware it was going on. "This man is not a freedom fighter," Davidson said.

The case also provided a glimpse into how Mexican drug cartels get their cut of the migrant smuggling business. Court documents show that in the Cancun area, the Zetas cartel charges Cuban smugglers \$10,000 per boat and up to \$3,000 per migrant to allow them to pass through their territory and assist in paying bribes to local officials.

No evidence surfaced in the case that Martin or any of the other Cuban ballplayers were mistreated. Only Martin has been identified by name in the Lazo case, but other Cuban stars such as Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Yasiel Puig have also been smuggled through Mexico.

Clay indicated he may appeal Lazo's sentence, calling it "unreasonable" because Lazo offered to cooperate with investigators before he was indicted and had only a limited role in the extortion. For his part, Lazo apologized for his crimes through a Spanish interpreter. Lazo said: "I am very repentant and remorseful for the crimes I have committed... I am so sorry I got involved in these issues."

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