

Sports News Roundup Jan. 16



Cuba Domadores Begin WSB Title Defense on Friday in Havana

Cuba Domadores begin the defense of their World Series of Boxing (WSB) title at home in Havana against WSB newcomers Morocco Atlas Lions on Friday.

The Lions could not have asked for a tougher draw in their opening contest against the defending Champions, but they will be full of confidence and excitement, and will be aiming to cause the biggest upset in the history of the competition.

Boxing fans in Cuba can view the event live on Friday at 8.30pm (local time) on Cuban TV or go to Coliseo de la Ciudad Deportiva, while fans across the world can watch the action free, live and on demand beginning at 20:30 (GMT -5) at AIBABoxingTV.com.

In the first fight of the evening, Cuba's 2013 AIBA Junior World Champion Joahnys Oscar Argilagos Perez competes at Light flyweight (49 kg) against Moroccan National Champion Zouhair El Bekkali who also won the Mohamed VI Trophy in October, and is no stranger to competing in Cuba, having reached the semi-finals of the Roberto Balado Cup in June 2014.

Fight two is at Bantamweight (56 kg), as Cuba's 2012 Olympic Champion Robeisy Ramirez looks to maintain his undefeated WSB record against Morocco's National Champion and Mohamed VI Trophy

winner Mohamed Hamout, who like his teammate El Bekkali will be hoping his successful year will inspire him against one of the best Bantamweights in the world.

Two-time AIBA World Championships silver medalist and Olympic bronze medalist Yasniel Toledo went 5-2 in WSB last season, and will hope to dominate the Light welterweight (64 kg) division again. His opponent is Morocco's Hamza El Barbari who took silver in June's Giraldo Córdova Cardín tournament in Cuba, and was narrowly defeated by Toledo in the Mohammed VI Cup last year. El Barbari took a round of Toledo in that three frame affair, and will hope the longer WSB format will increase his chances of picking up a priceless victory.

Former AIBA Junior World Champion Arlen Lopez made his WSB last season, and claimed his first win in the competition in September's "Clash of Champions" match against Astana Arlans Kazakhstan. The Cuban won many tournaments last season, and the Middleweight (75 kg) will look to become a key member of the Domadores this season. Trying to stop him will be Morocco's Badreddine Haddioui, who competed at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Erislandy Savon was named as the best boxer of WSB last season after the Heavyweight (91 kg) went 8-0 in the competition. His first opponent in Season V is Morocco's Amine Azzouzi who fought at the 2011 AIBA World Championships, and the last fight of the evening should produce fireworks.

The head coach of the Lions of Morocco, Mohamed Loumaini, showed himself proud to make a debut at the World Series of Boxing versus the Domadores of Cuba. " It's the best team for me, the best franchise and for us it is a great time to start. The challenge will be very tough, but if we want to be among the best, we have to beat the best," he said.

After completing the weigh-in for the initial match against the monarchs of the event, Loumaini explained that the goal of his pupils is to occupy one of the top three in Group A, and for that they expect to have a good performance in Havana.

The Atlas Lions of Morocco have seven foreign fighters on their squad, but according to the manager, these will be used to rotate their stars, not as the first fighter of each division.

Industriales Beats Matanzas in National Baseball Series

Matanzas lost some ground on top of the standings after losing 8-7 to Industriales in an excellent 10-innings game in more than five hours on Thursday in the second phase of the 54th Cuban Baseball Series.

Industriales' catcher Frank Camilo Morejon batted a hit to drive in a run to win over the Cocodrilos of Maikel Hidalgo, although the loss went to pitcher Yaniel Blanco.

Rudy Reyes batted 4 RBIs and Lisbán Correa hit a two-run homer to lead Havana team's offensive, and pitcher Yohandri Portal won the match. Yadiel Hernandez hit a homer and drove in three runs for the defeated.

Later on Thursday, Granma completed the slide over Artemisa and now comes three games down the top, while Isla de la Juventud did the same against Ciego de Avila.

Lázaro Blanco earned his ninth win of the season when Granma's Alazanes knocked out 12-2 Artemisa's Cazadores, with outstanding offensive by shortstop Adrian Moreno, who hit a homer and drove in four runs.

Isla de la Juventud defeated 2-1 Ciego de Ávila, with credit to reliever Javier Vazquez, and Héctor Manuel Mendoza took the save, as Luis Abel Castro hit a solo homer.

Pinar del Río won 7-5 over Holguin to avoid the slide in a game marked by the seventh win by pitcher

Yosvani Torres, despite allowing nine hits and four earned runs in five and third innings, with the eleventh save by Vladimir Gutiérrez.

Third baseman Osniel Madera and second baseman Andy Sarduy drove in two RBIs to lead the offensive of Pinar del Rio.

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