

# *Sports News Roundup May 23*

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## **Baseball**

Cuban slugger Alfredo Despaigne had an amazing performance in the *Japanese Professional Baseball League* by hitting 2 homers in the 10-6 win of his team, the *Chiba Lotte Marines*, over the *Saitama Seibu Lions*.

Despaigne, as DH, went 5 for 5 to raise his batting average to .263, the result of 25 hits in 95 at-bats, after 27 games in the main Japanese baseball circuit.

Besides the 2 homers for a total of 6 on the Season, the Caribbean slugger drove in 3 runs in the match and has already accumulated 19 RBIs, the 2nd-most in his squad.

The *Chiba Lotte Marines* appears 4th in the *Pacific League* with negative record of 19 wins and 22 losses, behind Fukuoka (23-16), Hokkaido (25-18), and Saitama (23-18) teams.

Meanwhile, the also Cuban Frederich Cepeda, in the 2nd division with the *Yomiuri Giants*, has a batting average of .279 with 4 homers and 11 RBIs, and his compatriot Hector Mendoza has pitched over 5.3 innings with 8 strikeouts and only 2 hits allowed.

Despaigne, Cepeda and Mendoza are part of the Cuban baseball pre-selection and are eligible to join the national team that will participate in the *Pan-American Games* this July in the Canadian city of Toronto.

## Chess

Cuban chess GM Leinier Dominguez took the leadership on Friday in the last round of the *2014-2015 Grand Prix* in the Russian city of Khanty-Mansiysk.

Dominguez tied his match with Russian GM Evgeny Tomashevsky in 101 moves of a *Gruenfeld Defense*, on a day when there were more victories by players in a single day in the tournament, up to now.

The big surprise of the 8th round was the victory of the Russian GM Dmitry Jakovenko over Italian GM Fabiano Caruana, the only one of all contenders with more than 2,800 Elo, after 47 moves of a *Ruy Lopez, Berlin* variant.

Other players who posted victories were: Israeli Boris Gelfand over Russian Peter Svidler, US Hikaru Nakamura over Georgian Baadur Jobava, and Alexander Grischuk against Sergey Karjakin in a Russian match.

After these results, leading the classification, Dominguez appears now with 5 points tied with Nakamura and Caruana, but the Cuban player has a better tie-break standard.

The players are resting on Saturday to play again tomorrow, Sunday, when Dominguez will rival French Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Caruana will face Karjakin, and Nakamura will go against Grischuk.

## Toronto 2015

CUBA has 387 seats for the *Pan-American Games* in Toronto and could complete a delegation of about 480 athletes, said Jose Antonio Miranda, director of INDER high-performance sports department.

Miranda pointed out that the bulk of outstanding berths is focused on athletics, including 121 athletes with remarkable records and almost another 80 applicants are expected.

He added that this validated figure is composed of 194 females and 194 males, and highlighted the prevailing sense of commitment in preparation for the tournament to be played from 10th to 26th next July.

He recalled that the current training cycle lived its previous great competitive time in *Veracruz 2014*, won by the Island as a result turned into incentive to make the necessary adjustments toward a more demanding stage.

He accepted that the growth of a Brazil that prepares everything to host the upcoming Olympics and the thrust of the host Canada, will be a remarkable dispute call to be undertaken with the maximum efficiency, especially from disciplines such as athletics itself, boxing, wrestling, rowing, shooting, wrestling and judo.

Asked about other edges of the stage to deal with the Cuban official also mentioned the sport increased of government and corporate support assigned to sportive fields and in those other countries, and the presence of Cubans, European and Asian experts whose presence privilege their pupils' results.

He emphasized that the work designed in Cuba has very strong pillars at the *Institute of Sports Medicine* and other entities in the sector while ensuring the support needed supplies.

He announced that they carry on meetings aimed at increasing the comprehensive training of athletes, coaches and other members of the technical-based dialogues with experts in different fields and visiting student, labor and defense centers.

As part of this work, the official enhanced the significance of the *Values of Dignity* where each sport assume their commitments ahead of a lid that will test again virtues like concentration, commitment, discipline and patriotism.

"The challenge is to do things right all the time, because each performance will have a specific value," said Miranda to highlight the purpose of retaining the 2nd place by country in an event where Cuba will not opt for 133 sets of medals.

"Our goal is reflected in the motto that we defend" he said about the conviction of deserving the victory to "Let us contemplate the country full of proud."

## **2015 Football CONCACAF Gold Cup**

The *2015 CONCACAF Gold Cup* tournament is just months away from kicking off and all teams are getting ready with international friendly matches. With the stiff competition that will be facing each team during the group stage and beyond, these friendly matches will be important. Once the tournament kicks off, there will be no more warm ups and these national teams hope to be prepared for everything the tournament has in store for them. One of those teams that will be hoping to have all the kinks worked out is Trinidad and Tobago. They will be competing in Group C along with Mexico, Cuba, and Guatemala and on July 12th, will travel to Glendale, AR where they will take on Cuba at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

Currently, the Trinidad and Tobago men's national soccer team is ranked as the 65th best team in the world according to the FIFA/Coca Cola rankings. Coming into the tournament, they don't have as much experience in matches this season, which could hurt them. They had a very successful 2014 calendar year including dominating opponents in the 2014 Caribbean Cup qualification matches and then playing very well in the tournament, losing in the finals to Jamaica on penalty kicks after a 0-0 score. During that tournament, they played Cuba to a 0-0 draw and will hope for better results this time around.

The Cuban men's national soccer team is currently ranked as the 109th best team in the world according to the FIFA/Coca Cola Rankings. Since last March, they have competed in 7 matches including 4 in the 2014 Caribbean Cup where they finished in 4th place after losing to Haiti 2-1. It was a respectable showing for the Cuban team and they will look to have another impressive showing when they compete against Trinidad and Tobago from the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, AR.

The University of Phoenix Stadium originally opened in 2006 and has been home of the Arizona Cardinals from the National Football League. The venue is also the site of the Fiesta Bowl in college football, has hosted two Super Bowls, World Wrestling Entertainment's *Wrestler Mania XXVI*, and now the *2015 CONCACAF Gold Cup*. It was used for the tournament in 2009 as well as international friendly matches including those with Mexico, United States, Venezuela, Denmark, Panama, and Guadeloupe.



**Radio Habana Cuba**