

Sports News Roundup June 16



Football

Sergio Ramos, star of the Spanish team and Real Madrid, traveled to Cuba today as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), according to local press reports.

"Today begins my agenda with UNICEF and my hope is to reach out to Cuba and learn more about the country," he announced on the social network. The emblematic Madrid player is world champion in South Africa (2010) and the twice holder of the European Championship (2008 and 2012).

In the same year he lifted the World Cup, Ramos made a similar visit Senegal.

A year ago, during the World Cup in Brazil, UNICEF gave him the honorary rank of ambassador of that agency of the United Nations.

After his stay in Cuba, the former central defender will begin his vacation until July 10th, when he is summoned to begin the pre-season of the Real Madrid commanded by its new coach, the Spanish Rafael Benitez.

And another news story from the soccer world says that against all odds, the selection of Bolivia dawned today as co-leader of *Group A*, alongside hosts Chile's squad, both with 4 points, after Monday's results at the *2015 IFAF America Football Cup*.

Volleyball

Defending champions Dominican Republic overcame Cuba 3-1 (25-27, 25-14, 25-22, 25-21) to remain undefeated after 3 clashes in *Pool B* of the *XIV Women's Volleyball Pan-American Cup* at Lima's *Eduardo Dibos Coliseum*.

After a very close 1st set, the Dominican team dictated the pace and was in control benefiting from the huge number of errors made by the Cuban side (38 to 19). The winners held a slight margin in blocks (11-10) while Cuba dominated in services winners 8-2.

Yonkaira Peña and Lisvel Eve had 14 and 13 points, respectively, to lead the scoring for the Dominican Republic. Veteran Cindy Rondon added 12, including a tournament-high 8 blocks, Marianne Fersola charted 11, and newcomer Erasma Moreno chipped in with 9 points.

Cuba's Melissa Vargas had a match-high 19 points, including 3 aces, Alena Rojas had 14 in the losing cause while Cubans Sulian Matienzo and Yanet Alvarez had 11 points each.

Prisilla Rivera, captain of Dominican Republic's women's volleyball team pointed to the importance of the new victory on their way to booking a ticket to the Grand Prix. "Now we have to think about tomorrow's match and recover from the mistakes we committed."

On the topic, Dominican coach Marcos Kwiek said "...in today's match we saw 2 good teams who know each other very well and that's why is so important to take advantage of the opponents' errors. Every game is tough and we have to keep working and achieve our goal of reaching the Grand Prix."

Finally, Cuba's coach Roberto Garcia commented that in the 1st set his team was in calm but in the 2nd their rivals adjusted their game and the Cuban blocking was not ready on time. We made too many errors in the 2nd set that were repeated in the last 2 sets and it was very difficult to recover.

High Jump

Cuban star Javier Sotomayor broke the high jump record (2,45m) on July 27th, 1993 in Salamanca, Spain, and 20 years later, no one has jumped higher than him... because of this, he's got a bar at the entrance of his house representing the 2,45m height.

"It was not a random decision. The idea came to my mind when I saw a bar at the entrance of the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. Then, I asked myself: Why don't I have something similar at home? It is a detail that stuns every visitor when they enter my home. When I was competing, I thought it was normal. Now that I am retired, I see it's very high."

"I was born here and I have always tried to represent my country with dignity. First, I did it as an athlete when I was active. Now retired, I have traveled the world and I have conveyed all my experiences as a Cuban athlete. I must talk about how I became a champion and I can't be silent about the importance of Cuba in all the process. The teaching and monitoring systems carried out by the government help a lot. Cuba has nurtured many great athletes. Being a blockaded and small country, we have 200 Olympic medals. Not bad, right?"

And regarding New York Cosmos visit to Cuba, he said that the new thaw in the Cuba and the U.S. relationship is promoting such sporting activities. Lately, there are many American singers, Senators, scientists, NBA players, and religious people coming to our country. It is good to see many American people traveling to Cuba and the other way around. There are many things we need. This relationship, from a human and political perspective, is profitable for both sides.

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