

Sports News Roundup June 30



New Key West-Havana Motor Boat Race

A new boat race in favor of friendship between the peoples of US and Cuba will be held in November, when a flotilla of motor boats from Key West in the United States will arrive in Cuban waters.

The boats will arrive after participating in the 35th edition of the *Offshore Powerboat Racing of the Key West World Racing Championship*, to be held from November 5th-8th.

According to information from the *Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba*, the *Havana Thunder Challenge flotilla* could resume the motor boat races that took place in the Straits of Florida in the early 20th century, and again become a classic.

The news was announced on Thursday, when it was also known that German racer Roger Klüh will try, in August, to set a speed record between Key West and Havana aboard the *Apache Star* motorboat capable of traveling at 100 mph.

Along with another 3 crew-members, the former professional ice hockey player, today a businessman and lover of motor boating will try to beat the record set by Forest Johnson, who led in 1958 the speedboat race between Miami and Havana, performing the crossing in 6.23 min.

According to 50 year-old Klüh, who describes himself as a man of sports, this project had to wait 3 and a half years because the U.S. government prevented him to reach Cuban shores, "until December 2014 came and then I saw an open window to make my dream come true," he said.

These two nautical events, which will continue bringing the communities of Cuba and the United States closer, will take place a few months after the Havana Challenge race, the first one in 15 years to receive approval from the U.S. government.

In 2004, then U.S. President George Bush signed a proclamation, still in force, which prohibits recreational boats sail to Cuba, unless authorized by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Coastal Carolina to Become First College Basketball Team to Visit Cuba

On Tuesday morning US college basketball team *Coastal Carolina* officially announced that it will travel to Cuba in early August, arriving August 6th and staying until the 14th, NBCS sports reports.

Cliff Ellis' team will play 3 games against Cuba's national team, which will be amid preparations for the FIBA America/Olympic qualifying tournament scheduled to be played in Mexico from August 31st to September 12th.

"This foreign tour to Cuba is a great honor for our program as the United States begins to open its relationship with Cuba." "...For us to be the first team to travel to Cuba is a testament to our success over the past several years. We will rely on NCAA tournament experiences to play competitive basketball against the Cuba's top-notch national team, Ellis said in the release.

Earlier this month the *New York Cosmos* of the North American Soccer League (NASL) played an exhibition in Havana against Cuba's national team, which is preparing for next month's *CONCACAF Gold Cup*. The *Cosmos* were the first American professional sports team to play in Cuba since 1999, when the *Baltimore Orioles* played the first of 2 exhibitions against the Cuban national team (the 2nd was played in Baltimore).

And another good news story says that the baseball powers of the Western Hemisphere meet this week in the Triangle, with a brief detour to Charlotte. The United States' Collegiate National Team will play against the Cuban National Team in a 5-day, 3-city series beginning July 1st.

The teams will open and close the series at the *USA Baseball National Training Complex* in Cary on Wednesday and Monday, July 6th; on Friday and Saturday, the teams meet at *Durham Bulls Athletic Park*, and on the 4th of July, they play at *BB&T Ballpark* in uptown Charlotte.

"It is a thrill to bring the Cuban National Team to North Carolina for 5 competitive, entertaining games in Cary, Durham and Charlotte, this summer," "...building on the success of the first 3 years of this renewed friendship series should make for an incredible experience for the players, coaches, fans and the international baseball community," Paul Seiler, USA Baseball's executive director/CEO, said in a statement.

After a 16-year hiatus, USA and Cuba resumed a yearly international friendship series on the baseball field in 2012 with the *USA Baseball Collegiate National Team* traveling to Havana for an intense 5-game series that saw the host nation score a 3-2 series victory. In 2013 (in the U.S.) and 2014 (in Cuba), the host nations dominated play with 5-game sweeps; in 3 years of renewed rivalry, Cuba leads the series 8-7.

America Football Cup

Eduardo Vargas fired host nation Chile into the *Copa America* final with 2 goals against 10-man Peru.

After Carlos Zambrano's dismissal, Vargas put Chile ahead shortly before half-time. Gary Medel's own goal drew Peru level, just reward for their strong performance, but a superb 2nd from Vargas earned Chile a 2-1 win...then, Vargas' 3rd-minute shot was deflected behind by Carlos Ascues before Chile's Arturo Vidal escaped sanction in an early moment of controversy.

Defender Zambrano shielded the ball out of play with Vidal snapping at his heels, and as the pair squared up the Juventus midfielder foolishly pushed a hand into his opponent's face.

He was not even booked but Zambrano was two minutes later following a tangle with Alexis Sanchez, Venezuelan referee Jose Argote indicating the punishment was for the combination of both incidents.

Peru went close when Jefferson Farfan headed Paolo Guerrero's cross against the left post, and Guerrero was again the creator as Carlos Lobaton swung an effort into the side-netting.

But Peru's task was soon made harder. Zambrano cleanly cleared the ball but his exaggerated studs-up follow-through connected with the small of Charles Aranguiz's back and earned the Eintracht Frankfurt defender a straight red card. Vidal blasted the free-kick straight into the wall.

Jorge Valdivia's improvised effort looped over before Peru sacrificed Christian Cueva for defender Christian Ramos to fill the void left by Zambrano. Valdivia went close again and Vargas was denied from close range by impressive right-back Luis Advincula's block.

Chile keeper Claudio Bravo crucially beat Farfan to Guerrero's low cross but it was Chile who took the lead 3 minutes before half-time. Sanchez's low cross was dummied by Aranguiz and rebounded off the far post for Vargas to finish scruffily.

He appeared just offside but Peru's ill luck evened itself out when Vargas' fine finish early in the 2nd half was struck off by an immediate but erroneous flag.

Farfan's header from Advincula's cross was weak, while Valdivia's shot at the other end bounced harmlessly to keeper Pedro Gallese.

Peru stunningly drew level on the hour when Medel turned Advincula's cross past his own keeper Bravo with Guerrero lurking.

Parity, though, lasted only 5 minutes as Vargas took aim from 25 yards and sent a dipping, swerving shot into the far corner of the net.

Peruvian substitute Claudio Pizarro threatened with his first touch and Sanchez fired just over at the other end, as did Vidal with a spectacular left-footed effort.

Gallese saved Vidal's stoppage-time strike on the counter but Peru were unable to carve out a chance for an equalizer.



Radio Habana Cuba