

Sports News Roundup July 07



Baseball

Alexander Malleta ripped a homer to help lead the Cuba National Team to a 4-1 win over the USA Collegiate National Team, in the finale of the five friendly-game series, on the 1st day of the Americas Baseball Festival on a perfect Monday night at the USA Baseball National Training Complex.

After Team USA clinched the 5-game series with a win on Saturday night in Charlotte, North Carolina, 11-1, the series concluded on Monday in the opening day of the Americas Baseball Festival, which also included a game between Canada and the USA Pan-America Games team. Team USA opened the series with back-to-back 2-0 wins, including handing the Cubans its first no-hitter in international play in the lid lifter.

Cuba plated single runs in the 2nd and 3rd innings, before getting a key two-out RBI single in the 5th inning to stretch its lead to 4-1. Team USA loaded the bases with 2 outs in the 5th inning, bringing the go-ahead run to the plate and chasing the Cuba starting pitcher. Team USA then loaded the bases with 2 outs in the 9th but couldn't get the key hit to stretch the game.

At the plate, Team USA was paced by a two-hit game from Brendan McKay (Louisville) - the 2015 Baseball America Freshman of the Year. Garrett Hampson (Long Beach State) had a double and Ryan Howard (Missouri) collected a pair of hits. JJ Schwarz (Florida) drew a walk and scored a run, and Nick Banks (Texas A&M) drew a pair of walks. Banks has reached base safely in all 15 games of the tour. Team USA (9-6) starter Tanner Houck (1-1) worked four innings, allowing 6 hits and 2 runs --1 earned--

not issuing a walk and striking out 3. Houck threw 58 pitches, with 38 going for strikes, allowing an unearned run in the 2nd and a solo homer in the 3rd.

In the 5th inning, lefty A.J. Puk (Florida) took the mound. A 6-foot-7, 215-pounder, Puk worked 3.1 innings in relief, allowing 6 hits and 2 runs, not issuing a walk and striking out 4. Team USA turned to Bailey Clark (Duke) in relief of Puk with a runner on 3rd, the infield in and 1 out in the 8th inning. Clark got a grounder to Howard at shortstop, before escaping the jam with a pop up to Hampson. Clark worked 1.2 innings, allowing a hit, issuing an intentional walk and striking out 3.

Team USA will return to action on Tuesday, playing the Canadian National Team at 3 p.m. EDT at the NTC.

Cuba took a lead in the second inning as Urmay Guerra led off with a single, taking second on a grounder. After a passed ball pushed Guerra to third with two outs, Yulexis La Rosa painted a RBI single down the rightfield line, giving Cuba a 1-0 lead.

In the 3rd inning, Malleto ripped a solo homer with 2 outs down the rightfield line, stretching the Cuba lead to 2-0.

Team USA got on the board in the 4th inning, as Banks drew a one-out walk and was replaced by Schwarz on 1st base with a fielder's choice. A throwing error allowed Schwarz to take 2nd with 2 outs, before McKay dropped a single into shallow centerfield to score Schwarz.

Cuba plated 2 runs in the 5th inning, as Guerra singled to center-field with 2 outs, scoring Malleto and Yoribis Borroto.

Cuba (2-3) starter Lazaro Blanco fired a strong start to help pace the win. Blanco worked 4.2 innings, allowing four hits and one unearned run, walking 3 and striking out 4. In a key spot, with the bases loaded and 2 outs in the 5th inning, Cuba manager Roger Machado was able to utilize his baseball powers of telegnosis to turn to left-handed pitcher Livan Moinelo (1-0) to face the left-handed hitting Banks, with Moinelo getting a looking strikeout to escape the jam. Moinelo worked 3.1 hitless innings to pick up the win, allowing just 2 walks and fanning 3. Hector Mendoza worked the 9th to pick up the save.

Cuban IOC Member Reynaldo Gonzalez Dies in Mexico

Reynaldo Gonzalez, a Cuban member of the International Olympic Committee, or IOC, since 1995, died in Mexico City, a Mexican Olympic Committee spokesman said Sunday. He was 66.

Gonzalez, who served as executive secretary of the Pan-American Sports Organization, held high-level posts in Cuba from 1994 to 1997 and was president of the Cuban National Sports, Physical Education and Recreation Institute, or INDER, from 1981 to 1994.

"He was a very passionate and capable sports leader," IOC president Thomas Bach said in a statement. "We will miss his great advice but also his warm and always friendly personality and great sense of humor."

Gonzalez, who was born in the central Cuban city of Ciego de Avila, spent the last years of his life in Mexico City.

Toronto 2015

Water polo teams, of both sexes, begin tomorrow the participation of the Cuban delegation to the *XVII Pan-American Games* in Toronto, Canada, when debuting both against their American counter-parts.

And regarding this regional sporting event, we knew that the province of Camagüey will be the most represented in this sport fair with 41 athletes in 15 sports, which is the 3rd largest Cuban squad, and it includes continental champions and world medalists.

51st National School Games Kicks Off

With a representation of over 6800 athletes participating from today in the *LI Edition of the National School Sports Games* in 12 provinces of Cuba, the most important sportive event was inaugurated in the southern city of Cienfuegos.

Recreation

The sport is already in Summer in the westernmost province of Cuba, Pinar del Rio, with full of recreational program offers to enjoy in the People's Councils of all municipalities.

Concacaf Approves Reform to Combat Corruption

The *Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (Soccer) Associations (CONCACAF)* announced in an official statement it approved a reform to combat corruption.

The Confederation will show its their fans, sponsors, member associations and other stakeholders that it really has the strength and devotion required to manage, develop and promote the game, with the proper responsibility and transparency, said on Monday.

In addition, the sport institution promised to be more transparent after the scandal that shook the foundation of the *International Federation (FIFA)* a month ago.

It is a one more step towards the beginning of a change of organizational system to improve business operations through better governance, increased public disclosure, and greater anti-corruption controls, reflects the report made Monday.

The reform was approved on Saturday by the *Executive Committee of CONCACAF* in the Canadian city of Vancouver, and begin to be immediately implemented.

The new instrument was prepared to "review and adopt stronger policies in relation to transactions with third parties."

All employees and members of the Executive Committee must annually certify compliance with policies, including restrictions on transactions with close relatives, the report said.

The agency will now require a minimum of Executive Committee members are independent and not affiliated with any football-related activity of any member association.

Also impose limits for senior managers are not perpetuated in power, it will publish annual financial statements and the budget, and will make available upon request the compensation of officers and Executive Committee members.

2015 CONCACAF Gold Cup Preview: US, Costa Rica, Mexico favorites

The *13th edition of the CONCACAF Gold Cup* will begin on Tuesday, and the US has an opportunity to secure its sixth title, which would match the Americans with Mexico for the most ever. The tournament concludes on July 26th with the final in Philadelphia.

There are three groups of four teams, and the top two from each group advance, while the top two teams finishing in third place also advance.

Let's breakdown each team in each group, and hand out predictions and much more.

Group A: United States, Honduras, Panama, Haiti

United States: The clear favorites to win the tournament, the US is riding high entering the competition. The USMNT looked potent in attack in the 4-0 friendly victory against Guatemala on Friday. Brad Guzan is more than capable of leading the United States in goal with Tim Howard taking a break from the team, and DeAndre Yedlin looks like a future star on the wing with his speed and touch.

The backline concerns remain, but the US has been working to correct those issues and build confidence. No reason to believe the US won't coast in this group, especially if Jozy Altidore finds his form. USMNT fans are expecting a trophy, but can anyone in this tournament produce as nice a strike as Timmy Chandler did on Friday?

Honduras: One of the stronger teams in the tournament, keep an eye on talented midfielder Andy Najar, a former member of DC United and now with Belgian giants Anderlecht. This squad has some talent, is physical and has speed on the wings. Young forward Anthony Lozano is one of the bright young players to watch on the team. At 22, he has 27 goals in 62 games for Olimpia.

Panama: The baseball nation has improved greatly in soccer over recent years, much like Venezuela has in South America. The team's strength is in attack with veterans Blas Perez and Luis Tejada, but Perez, 34, and Tejada, 33, are probably past their prime. But in a competition that doesn't have the highest of quality of teams to play against, they can still make an impact. Expect Panama to be in contention for a quarterfinal spot. The country has made two Gold Cup finals in the last 10 years and knows what it takes to succeed in this cup.

Haiti: Minnows of the region, nobody expects Haiti to get a point out of this competition. The squad is young and hungry for a good showing, and maybe, just maybe, they can get a point from the Panama game. But it's not likely.

Predicted finish: 1. US (9 points), 2. Honduras (6 points), 3. Panama (3 points), 4. Haiti (0 points)

Group B: Costa Rica, Jamaica, El Salvador and Canada

Costa Rica: One of the favorites to win the competition after last's years World Cup run, they will be without star goalkeeper Keylor Navas, who plays for Real Madrid. The former Levante star is dealing with an lower leg injury, so the team will likely look to Patrick Pemberton behind the net. Where Costa Rica is the strongest is in attack, with Joel Campbell, Bryan Ruiz and Alvaro Saborio. Los Ticos shouldn't have a problem winning at least two games in this group and advancing.

Jamaica: The days of Jamaica contending for a spot in the World Cup seem like ages ago. The team finished third in this competition in 1993 and fourth in 1998, but have struggled to do much of anything since. Always fast, Jamaica lacks the technical skill and ability up top to really threaten. But in a group with weak teams like El Salvador and Canada, anything can happen.

El Salvador: Long gone are the days of contending for El Salvador, it seems. The team has had trouble producing quality talent and has fallen way behind the region's top teams. The Salvadorans have some skill in the middle of the pitch but are inexperienced up top, aside from forward Rafael Burgos. The team

has a young backline that will be tested, but the team has to feel good about its chances of escaping a weak group.

Canada: Sharing the hosting duties with the United States, Canada is the only nation outside of Mexico and US to win this tournament. The team is pretty weak, which has been the case for years, but it lands in a fairly easy group with the potential to escape. Spanish coach Benito Floro will count heavily on striker Tosaint Ricketts. The quick attacker is one of the more talented players on the team and will have to be in fine form in the final third for the team to have a chance of advancing.

Predicted finish: 1. Costa Rica (7 points), 2. Canada (4 points), 3. El Salvador (4 points), 4. Jamaica (2 points)

Group C: Mexico, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Guatemala

Mexico: No Hector Moreno and no Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez could mean big trouble for Mexico. They're a lock to advance out of the group stage with little trouble, but what about when we get to the knockout stage? Can Giovani Dos Santos and Carlos Vela provide enough spark in the attack? Most importantly, will they be able to finish their chances? Losing Chicharito hurts, as he is the star and top forward on the team. Mexico is deep, confident and talented, but production must come from Vela and Dos Santos up top, or else it could be an early exit.

Cuba: A baseball nation that has earned the respect of other countries in recent editions, Cuba could surprise a few in this tournament. The team works as a unit, but isn't tested often. All of Cuba's players, as one would expect, play professionally in Cuba. To say the Cuban league is strong is like calling the Moldova national team a European power. They are a bit of a mystery, have tons of speed along with athleticism and hope to spring a surprise or two in this cup.

Trinidad and Tobago: The Soca Warriors should feel good about finishing second in this group, but recent form raises concerns. The team lost to Panama in a March friendly and didn't look sharp in attack, failing to create enough quality chances to strike. The team is really young, and Chicago Fire midfielder Joevin Jones must provide an outlet forward from the left side of the midfield. T and T should be able to beat Guatemala and Cuba, but a slip-up against either could mean no quarterfinals.

Guatemala: The team showed some attacking ability in the friendly loss to US, but at the back the guys seem wreckless and out of sync. Guatemala has some ability down the left, and goalkeeper Paulo Motta can keep his nation in the game, but there isn't likely enough in the final third to get Guatemala out of the group.

Predicted finish: 1. Mexico (7 points), 2. Trinidad and Tobago (5 points), 3. Guatemala (2 points), 4. Cuba (1 point).

Note: We predict El Salvador and Panama to advance as the top two third-place teams.

Group stage schedule (all times ET)

Tuesday, July 7

Panama vs. Haiti, 7 p.m. (FS2)

USA vs. Honduras, 9:30 p.m. (FS1)

Wednesday, July 8

Costa Rica vs. Jamaica, 8 p.m. (FS2)

El Salvador vs. Canada, 10:30 p.m. (FS2)

Thursday, July 9

Trinidad and Tobago vs. Guatemala, 7 p.m. (FS2)

Mexico vs. Cuba, 9:30 p.m. (FS1)

Friday, July 10

Honduras vs. Panama, 6 p.m. (FS2)

USA vs. Haiti, 8:30 p.m. (FS1)

Saturday, July 11

Jamaica vs. Canada, 6:30 p.m. (FS2)

Costa Rica vs. El Salvador, 9 p.m. (FS2)

Sunday, July 12

Trinidad and Tobago vs. Cuba, 6:30 p.m. (FS2)

Guatemala vs. Mexico, 9 p.m. (FS2)

Monday, July 13

Haiti vs. Honduras, 7 p.m. (FS1)

Panama vs. USA, 9:30 p.m. (FS1)

Tuesday, July 14

Jamaica vs. El Salvador, 6 p.m. (FS1)

Canada vs. Costa Rica, 8:30 p.m. (FS1)

Wednesday, July 15

Cuba vs. Guatemala, 6 p.m. (FS2)

Mexico vs. Trinidad and Tobago, 8:30 p.m. (FS2)

Note: The quarterfinals will be played on July 18 and 19, the semifinals are on July 22, the 3rd place match is July 25 and the final on July 26.



Radio Habana Cuba