

Sports News Roundup December

05



Baseball

The U.S. Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) will embark on an historic goodwill tour in Cuba from Dec. 15th-18th. Hall of Famer Joe Torre, MLB's Chief Baseball Officer, and Dave Winfield, the MLBPA's Special Advisor to the Executive Director, will be joined by a group of current Major League players, who will be announced at a later date.

The tour will mark MLB's first visit to the island since the Baltimore Orioles played an exhibition game against the Cuban National Team in March 1999. The joint effort will consist of an opening press conference at *Hotel Nacional*, featuring Torre, Winfield and the participating players; children's workshops at Havana's *Estadio Latinoamericano* and Matanzas' *Victoria de Giron Stadium*; and a charity event in conjunction with *Caritas Cubana*.

"Major League Baseball is very fortunate to have an opportunity to play a constructive role in the improvement of our country's relations with Cuba, and it is particularly pleasing that our sport has a significant number of highly-decorated ambassadors who can make an impression both on and off the field," said Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. who added that baseball represents a pivotal common bond in our cultures, and the impact that Cuban ballplayers have made on our game is undeniable. I am hopeful that this tour will represent the beginning of a longstanding relationship.

"The Major League Baseball Players Association is proud to be joining Major League Baseball on this history-making visit to Cuba," said MLBPA Executive Director Tony Clark. "The Players will be thrilled to visit a country that shares our passion and enthusiasm for the sport of baseball, and we all hope that this visit marks the beginning of a relationship that will only grow stronger - on and off the baseball field."

Following is the complete schedule of events, subject to change:

Date

Time (ET)

Event

Location

Tuesday, December 15th

3:30 p.m.

Press Conference &
Media Availability

(Torre, Winfield & all participating players)

Havana's Hotel Nacional

Wednesday, December 16th

10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m

Children's clinic

Havana's Latinoamericano Stadium

Wednesday, December 16th

4:00 p.m.

Charity Event with

Caritas Cubana

TBD

Thursday, December 17th

10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m

Children's clinic

Matanzas' Victoria de Giron Stadium

Also regarding this topic, it was known that over the holiday break at the end of the month, the University of Richmond baseball team will travel to Cuba and play 4 games against members of the Cuban Baseball Federation. With this historic trip, the *Spiders* will be the first team in the *Atlantic 10* to compete in Cuba.

Departing for Havana on December 15th and returning on the 23rd, the *Spiders* will tour Cuba's western provinces, concluding with games against teams from San José de las Lajas, Artemisa, Pinar del Rio, and Matanzas. Between games, the team will have the opportunity to experience Cuban history and culture through tours, lectures, and joint community service projects with local Cuban baseball players.

"You get to take an international trip once every 4 years as a team and especially with this young group, I think it's a great opportunity to bond and be together away from Richmond," said Richmond head coach Tracy Woodson.

"We looked at the Netherlands, Germany and Spain, but this opportunity emerged with Cuba and we wanted to be one of the first to go there and play its teams and experience that level of play. The whole University is excited about this tour and supported our efforts to make it happen and we are very appreciative.

Current Univ. Richmond Prof. in the Department of Latin American, Latino and Iberian Studies, Dr. Dixon Abreu, a former professional baseball player himself, will accompany the *Spiders* on the trip to Cuba and serve as a *de facto* guide, historian, and interpreter for the team. He will help the team navigate the cultural, political and sporting elements of the nation.

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