

Sports News Wrap up for January 24th



Baseball

Villa Clara beat Santiago de Cuba by a score of 5-4 and Matanzas succumbed 16-0 to Industriales in 5 innings before sealing the tie at the top among the current monarch and runner-up of the *53rd Cuban Baseball Series*.

Designated batter Rudeldis Garcia's sacrifice gave the victory to Villa Clara's *Los Naranjas* in the 9th inning, which was the result of the 8th straight loss of Santiago de Cuba's *Las Avispas*, banished to the last seat of the classification and 9 games from the leaders.

Meanwhile, Industriales gave Matanzas a KO by 16-0, including 18 hits and six homers, two by veteran Rudy Reyes, and one each by Rayko Olivares, Wilfredo Aroche, Stayler Hernandez and Yuliesky Gourriel.

Holguin surprised by 2nd night in a row to overcome Pinar del Río by 6-3 excellent supported by its opener Luis Angel Gomez, who just gave up 4 hits and 1 clean in 8 entries; Donald Duarte homered for the losers.

Artemisa took revenge by beating 8-1 to Isla de la Juventud with the 4th success of young talent Misael Villa and Dachel Duquesne's 2nd rescue while Alexander Ayala and star Frederich Cepeda.

Now Villa Clara and Matanzas lead the Table of the *53rd Cuban Baseball Championship* with 33 and 20, followed by Pinar del Río (32-21), Industriales (31-22), Holguín (30-23), Artemisa (29-24), Isla de la Juventud (29-24) and the disappointing team of Santiago de Cuba (24-29).

Chess

The Holguin's GM Isán Ortiz (ELO 2601) demonstrated his status as holder of Cuba and dominates today, after 2 days of competition, the *National Chess Championship* (m).

Ortiz took advantage of a Sicilian defense to bend the FIDE Master (FM) Eduardo Méndez (2338) from Havana and accumulates 2 points. Behind are located the GM Yuri González (2549) and IM Carlos Hevia (2524), both from the capital, with 1 and a half points.

The event will run until February 5th at the *Provincial Art Gallery* of Villa Clara, with the *All Against All* format.

And concerning the science game, Cuban GM Leinier Dominguez made tables with his Israeli counterpart Boris Gelfand to stay among the privileged positions at the *Tata Steel Chess Championship*, held at the High Tech Campus Eindhoven University in the Netherlands, which closed its 9th round with Armenian GM Levon Aronian almost crowned.

Now Cuba has 5.5 units and shares positions 2nd through 5th with local GM Anish Giri, and GMs Italian Fabiano Caruana and Russian Sergey Karjakin, who was defeated by Aronian.

Tomorrow is the last day off and on Saturday, Leinier will move white pieces against Aronian, who exhibits 2 draws, 1 win and 1 loss in classical games; the rest of the matches will cover Giri-Karjakin, Van Wely-Gelfand, Harikrishna-So, Caruana-Nakamura, and Rapport-Naiditsch duels.

Volleyball

Matanzas is the only undefeated team in the 1st qualifying round of the *National Volleyball Championship* (m) to reach its 3rd victory against Sancti Spiritus, with a stage at the *Rafael Fortún Palace of Sports* in the city of Camagüey, where Matanzas won with ease by 3-0 with partials of 25-10, 25-17, 25-18.

Meanwhile, the current monarch, La Habana, got its 1st win and snatched Villa Clara's unbeaten pace by 3-0 (25-20, 25-20, 25-16) while Camagüey beat 3-0 to Santiago de Cuba (27-25, 25-22, 25-21).

Matanzas now leads the tournament that observes the system of *All Against All* to 2 rounds, followed by La Habana, Camagüey, Villa Clara, Santiago de Cuba, and Sancti Spiritus.

This Friday will be the 4th and penultimate day of competition with clashes Santiago Cuba-La Habana, Camaguey-Sancti Spiritus, and Matanzas-Villa Clara, while the 2nd qualifying round will be held in Sancti Spiritus city where the first 4 places will then discuss the title in Santiago de Cuba.

IJF President To Visit Cuba

The head of the *International Judo Federation* arrived in Cuba today, Friday, to review preparations for the *1st Judo Grand Prix* to be held in Cuba, sports news website Jit reported.

The president of the international body (IJF), Marius Vizer, will meet with national sports officials and offer his organization's support in organizing the event, set to take place June 6th and 7th.

The tournament in Cuba will alternate with the *Grand Prix* in Miami, Florida, and is part of the classification system for the *2016 Olympic Games* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The tournament grants winners 300 points, making it a very attractive event for top judo competitors, and following the tournament, the IJF plans to establish an international training center at Cuba's Varadero beach resort, 150 km. from Havana in the western province of Matanzas.

Fourteen Countries Expected to Compete in Cuba's Wrestling Top

Some 14 countries and regions are expected to compete in the 45th edition of the *Granma-Cerro Pelado International Wrestling Tournament*, Cuba's most important wrestling event, which is held every year since the 1970s and embraces a large number of Olympic and world champions, sports news website Jit said.

Seven countries have confirmed their participation in the event, to be held Feb. 10th to 16th in Havana, including Germany, Puerto Rico, Chile, the United States, France, Ecuador and Spain, while Venezuela, Canada, Brazil, Honduras, Colombia, Argentina and Italy are still pending to confirm, said Cuban sports official Manuel Rodriguez.

The competition offers an opportunity to pick out Cuba's best talents in the lead-up to the *World Championship* in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in September, and the *Central American and Caribbean Games* in Veracruz, Mexico, in November, said the official.

The new weight divisions implemented by the international wrestling federation (FILA), covering Greco-Roman categories of 59, 66, 71, 75, 80, 85, 98 and 130 kg; and free-style 57, 61, 66, 70, 74, 86, 97 and 125 kg for men, and 48, 53, 55, 58, 60, 63, 69 and 75 kg. for women, are included.

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