

Cuba clears island-born basketball player to play for Puerto Rico

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Havana, September 14 (RHC) -- Cuba gave the green light for basketball player Ysmael Romero, born on the island but with U.S. citizenship, to play for the Puerto Rico national team.

In a letter addressed to Yum Ramos, president of the Puerto Rican Basketball Federation, the Commissioner of that sport in Cuba, Dalia Henry, affirmed that the Cuban side "has no objection" for

Romero, 30 years old and 2.03m, to be able to join the Puerto Rican national team in the future.

"Attending your request so that the Cuban-born player Ysmael Romero, with U.S. citizenship and residence in Puerto Rico for 10 years, can integrate the Puerto Rican national team because of his permanence and immigration status, the Cuban Federation has no objection that he can participate," Henry said in her letter.

Christened in the Island of Enchantment as "El Cubanazo", Romero is the first Cuban basketball player emigrated to receive the approval of the Cuban Federation to play with another country, after doing so with the Cuban team.

A native of the province of Villa Clara, Romero has been playing since 2016 in Puerto Rico's elite league (BSN), in clubs such as the Bayamón Vaqueros and Atlético de San Germán. He has also played in leagues in Argentina, Mexico and Israel, among other nations.

The possibility that Romero will be able to play for Puerto Rico starting in November is welcomed by fans, managers and the media in Puerto Rico, where "el Cubanazo" has earned the respect and affection of all.

"The idea is that he will be available for November," Yum Ramos told the Puerto Rican media and explained that the four requirements necessary to present the change of citizenship to FIBA are ready, including letters from the Cuban Federation and the player's request.

"I'm ready Puerto Rico, thank you," Romero wrote on social media.

During the Centrobasketball Puerto Rico-2012, the player left the Cuban national team, when Cuban basketball players were not yet authorized to compete in professional leagues.

In December 2020 he spent his year-end vacations with his family in Santa Clara, after 8 years without visiting his country.

The power forward is characterized by his fierce defense and remarkable offense and is playing an outstanding season with the champion Vaqueros de Bayamón. Last weekend he shined in the All-Star Game of the Puerto Rican league, scoring 17 points and making a spectacular dunk, considered by some experts as the play of the game.

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