

# *Sports News Roundup July 31*

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## **NORCECA U-21**

Cuba displayed overall talent in a dominant performance against the United States in the 2nd day of actions in *Pool C* at the *NORCECA U-21 Continental Volleyball Championship* taking place at *Palacio de los Deportes of San Salvador*.

Cuba won by scores of 25-13, 25-16, 25-18 to improve their win-loss record to 2-0 while the United States evened their mark at 1-1. Cuba will play then against Nicaragua tomorrow.

The Cubans, who the night earlier had dispatched Mexico in 4 sets, were even better on Wednesday against the Americans, and held big advantages in all the scoring categories.

The Caribbean team had an overwhelming margin in kills (38-21), 9-1 in blocks while the difference in aces was 5-2. Cuba gained 22 points on American errors while giving away 23 with their own mistakes in a match where Osmany Uriarte topped Cuba with 17 points, including 5 blocks, and Abraham Alfonso added 16.

## **Boxing**

*London 2012 Olympic* champion, Robeisy Ramirez, will look for his ticket in Bogotá for the boxing tournament of *Veracruz-2014*, official sources confirmed.

Raúl Fernández, member of the group of coaches for the Cuban squad, said Ramirez will attempt to qualify for the regional meet in the 56 kg division, in a tournament that will be held at Colombia from August 3rd to 8th.

The monarch of the immediate lower division, who spent time away from the ring by a disciplinary sanction, will be accompanied by his countrymen Yobany Veitía (52) and Arlen Lopez (75).

So far, the island has ensured its presence with 7 fighters, among whom star Roniel Iglesias (69), Julio Cesar La Cruz (81), Lazaro Alvarez (60) and Yasnier Toledo (64) appear.

The others with a safe passport are Santiago Amador (49), Erislandy Savon (91) and Yoandris Toirac (over 91), who won the right in the June qualifier in Tijuana, Mexico.

The Colombian competition will fairly supply quotas for the last 50 tickets to Veracruz-2014, and it will be attended by more than 90 boxers from 21 countries.

## **Judo**

Olympic and world champion Idalis Ortiz is leading the women's national judo team at the *World Championship of Chelyabinsk*, Russia, running from August 25th to the 31st.

In addition to Ortiz, 78 kilos, the team is comprised of Maria Celia Laborde and Dayaris Mestre, 48 kilograms and finalists of the *Havana-2014 Grand Prix*, the *London-2012 Olympic* runners-up Yanet Bermoy (52) and Yalennis Castillo (78), along with Aliuska Ojeda (57), Maricet Espinosa (63) and Onix Cortes (70).

The president of the *Cuban Judo Federation*, Rafael Manso, said Cortés returned to the team after recovering from an injury in the rectus abdominis muscle that kept her away from competitions since early this year.

He said the women's national team has spent several days training in France, with a view to the world competition.

## **Chess**

Paraguayan GM Axel Bachmann won the title in the 5th edition of the *Ibero-American Chess Championship* after ending in a tie against the Spanish of Russian origin Oleg Korneev at the *El Posito de Linares Jaén Auditorium*, and finished the competition undefeated.

Bachmann used the white pieces in a game that lasted barely an hour, knowing that the draw would guarantee him the title with 7.5 points from a possible of 9 to fulfill the forecast in the competition, as he was on top of the list with 2652 Elo points and dominated the event from start to finish.

The Peruvian GM Jorge Cori, 3rd originally favorite to win, finished 2nd with 7 points, followed by Oleg Korneev with 6.5 to close with Colombian IM Alder Escobar, Brazilian GM Gilberto Milos and Costa Rican IM Bernal Gonzalez.

Cuban GM Isam Ortiz ended in 12th place, followed by Argentine GM Alejandro Hoffman (15), Mexican GM Manuel Leon Hoyos (17) and Ecuadorian Carlos Matamoros (18).

## **Basketball**

A player on Cuba's national basketball team, Alexei Mestre, 27, who played with the team during a series of exhibition matches in China, has apparently defected ahead of the *Centrobasket Tournament* in Mexico, the newspaper *Granma* said on Wednesday.

*Granma* disclosed the defection in an item on the *Centrobasket Tournament* which said another player, Osmel Oliva, would be point guard "after Alexei Mestre's desertion."

After China, the Cuban team played a friendly cap in El Salvador and the Caribbean Basketball Championship in Tortola, Virgin Islands, last month, where Mestre presumably left the team.

Cuba recently raised salaries of athletes and began allowing them to sign contracts with foreign clubs, in a bid to stem defections in this valuable sector, which remains very susceptible to the lure of higher pay abroad.

Cuba is in *Group A* of the *Centrobasket Tournament* in Nayarit, Mexico, along with Jamaica, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

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