

# *National handball team prepares for the World Cup*

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## **Handball**

Havana, 5 Jan (JIT) - The Cuban handball national team left for Croatia, where it will carry out a preparation base before the World Championship to be hosted by that country along with Denmark and Norway.

The Cubans settled in the city of Umag, located on the coast of Istria, about 270 kilometers from Zagreb, the headquarters of group G, in which they were placed.

In these previous days, they will play friendly matches against the national teams of Kuwait and Algeria, and against the RK Porek Club, which has managed to place among the best in the Premier League of that sport in the Balkan country.

“Our goal is to prepare ourselves to arrive in the best possible way to the competition, we are all gathered here and we have just had our first training session,” Jover Jorge Hernandez, the team's technical director, told JIT.

After several editions without qualifying, the Antilleans are returning to these competitions thanks to a generation that won the IHF Emerging Nations Championship Bulgaria 2023, led by Hanser Rodriguez, Ronaldo Almeida, and goalkeeper Magnolia Suarez.

They will debut on the 16th against Slovenia, world medalist in 2017 and tenth in the previous edition of these events; on the 18th they will face Iceland, an equally strong side, who knows what it is to play an Olympic final as in Beijing 2008; and they conclude on the 20th against Cape Verde, at first sight the least difficult side to get a victory.

Given that the top three in each group advance to the next phase, the team from the Greater Antilles looks at the encounter with the Africans as their chance to overcome that stage.

However, the Cape Verdeans have shown a dizzying development in the discipline, managing to win the subtitle in the African Handball Championship of Egypt 2022, although in their only appearance in world championships, also in Egypt a year earlier, they finished last.

This will be the eighth participation of the Cubans in world tournaments, among which stands out the eighth place achieved in Egypt 1999 after losing in the quarterfinals to Sweden, the eventual champion.

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