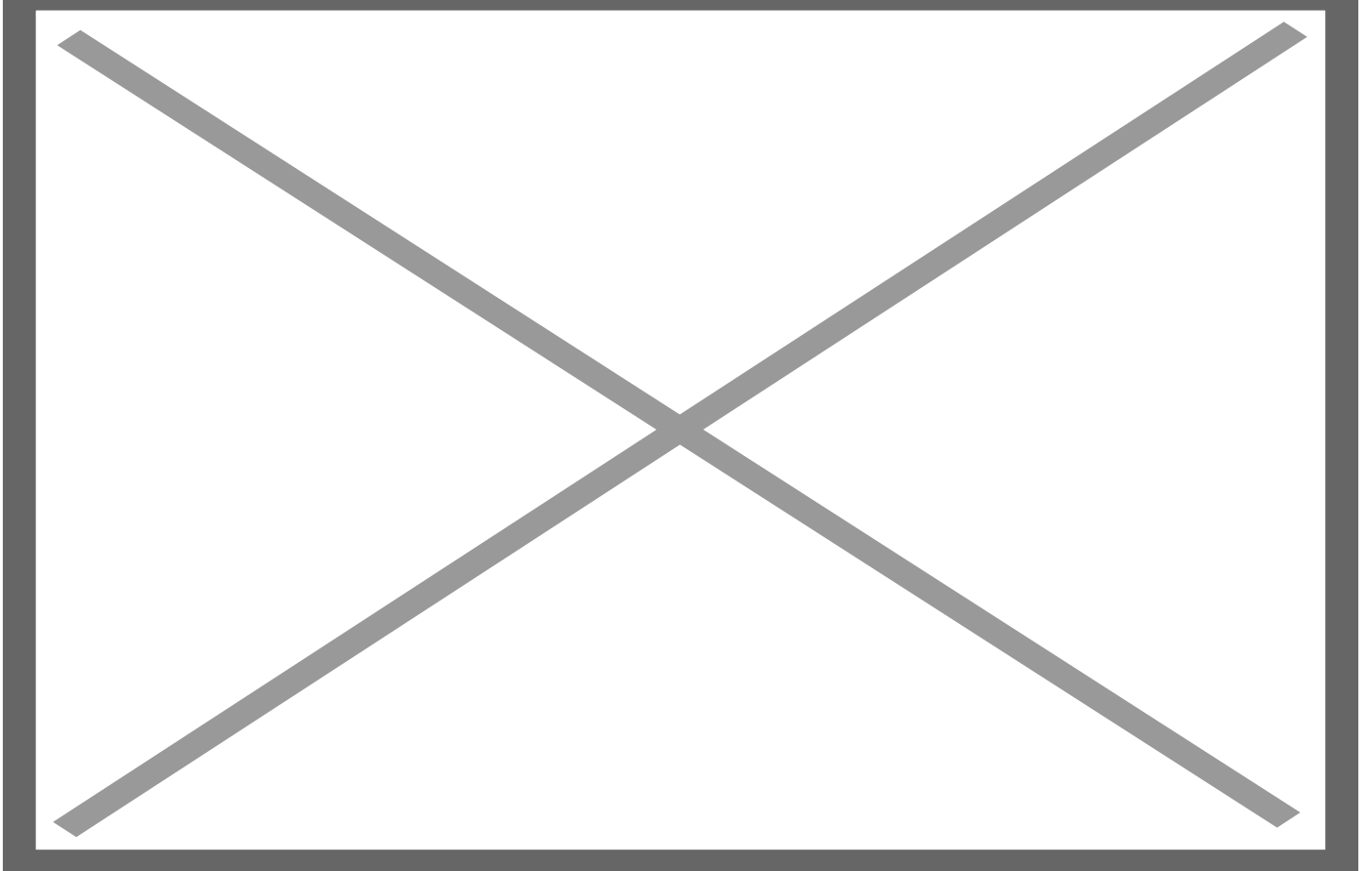


Cuban handball team draws friendly match on the road to the World Cup

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Havana, Jan 8 (ACN) - The Cuban handball team is holding preparatory matches in Umag, Croatia, one of the host countries for the world championship of the discipline, which Cuba will debut on January 16.

The team led by Jover Hernandez tied for 33 goals against Algeria in the first of several friendly matches.

The match, which the Africans tied in the last minute, left positive sensations in the squad and in its technical director, who expressed his satisfaction with what was achieved.

Hernández chose Dariel García, Frank Cordiés, Cristopher Martínez, the young right winger Victor Dawking, Eduardo Valiente, and Magnol Suárez, the latter as goalkeeper and captain, as starters in the first of three friendlies scheduled so far in the city located 250 km from Zagreb.

“The tactical plan was fulfilled, which was essential, and more than that, we managed to stay ahead throughout the game until our mistake allowed the opponent to equalize in the last 30 seconds,” commented Hernandez in statements to the press.

He also made reference to the excellent physical shape of the players, which is why they maintained a high intensity during the 60 minutes, both starters and substitutes.

“It is very remarkable the order and tactical discipline that the team maintained during most of the challenge despite being the first friendly game in which we also detected some mistakes and that is the importance of these clashes,” he said.

Jit, a digital sports newspaper, points out that the tie, beyond being a friendly one, has a high significance against an opponent that holds the African subtitle, only defeated in the final of this event by Egypt, one of the three greats of the continent along with themselves and Tunisia.

On Thursday, September 9, the Cubans will play their second test against Kuwait, a team that has lost prominence in Asia in the face of the rapid rise of Qatar, but still ranks among the top three Asian teams, including South Korea.

A few days ago, the Antillean technical director announced another game for January 10, against Club RK Porek, which has managed to rank among the best in the Premier League of that sport in the Balkan country.

In the world championship shared by the nations of Denmark, Norway, and Croatia, the representation of the Greater Antilles has as its goal, according to statements, to advance to the second phase of the tournament for that they must overcome the African team of Cape Verde in a game scheduled for January 20.

The Antilleans will face the Slovenians in the opening match of the group on the 16th, then on the second day, the Cubans will play against Iceland, who qualify for the 14th consecutive time to the most important men's tournament of this sport.

In total, the Cubans have taken part in 7 World Cups and achieved their best result in the Egypt 1999 edition with an 8th place, when they lost in the quarterfinals against Sweden, the eventual champion.

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