

Sports News Roundup Jan. 12



Baseball

The reigning monarch Pinar del Río dominated its subset with its arch-rival Industriales, one of the great classics of the *54th Cuban Baseball Championship* held on Saturday by defeating the Havana team 4-2.

Liván Moinelo won success as a reliever to tolerate 2 hits in 3 innings, backed by Vladimir Gutiérrez' 10th save, while Donal Duarte hit a triple that brought in 2 runs and Yordanis Linares took off solo home run for the winners, while the catcher Felix Carbonell homered and drove in 2 for Industriales, with defeat for the veteran Alberto Bicet, who admitted punishment of 10 hits and 3 cleans in 7 episodes.

With this result, the disciples of laureate mentor Alfonso Urquiola joined his 5th victory in the last 6 presentations to tie for 3rd step with Industriales with 29 wins and 22 lost.

Matanzas (36-15) was ratified in front of the ladder to overwhelm 11-4 to battered Holguin (24-27) with offensive role of

outfielder Yadiel Hernandez, 3-2, with 1 homer, 3 runs scored and 2 RBIs, in game won by opener Yoanni Yera.

Alfredo Despaigne hit homer in the victory of runner-up leader Granma (31-20) over Ciego de Ávila (28-23) by a closed 2-1 margin, with credit for the fast right-hander Alain Tamayo, which only admitted 2 hits in 7 chapters, supported by Yoennis Turcás' rescue.

Finally, Artemisa (28-23) completed the only sweep of the weekend to overcome the decreased Isla de la Juventud (27-24) by 12-10, which has suffered its 6th defeat in line in a game marked by offensive role of Jorge Luis Barcelán's 2 homers and 4 RBIs for the winners.

After Sunday rest, Series resumes today Monday with the caps Industriales-Matanzas, Isla de la Juventud-Ciego de Avila, Holguin-Pinar del Río, and Granma-Artemisa, always at the home of the first one.

Soccer

The Cuban U-20 soccer team has a crucial match against Honduras today in *Group B* of the final phase of the *North, Central American and Caribbean Confederation (CONCACAF)*, based in Jamaica.

12 teams compete in this lid divided into 2 groups looking for 4 tickets to the *World Cup* of the category to be settled this year in New Zealand.

The Cuban team, directed by William Bennet, is in a precarious situation after suffering a resounding 9-1 defeat against favorite cast of Mexico in its debut last Saturday, held at the *Montego Bay Sports Complex*, while Hondurans began with a 2-2 draw against El Salvador.

Group B is completed with Haiti, Canada, Honduras and El Salvador, while in the A are struggling the United States, Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Panama, Guatemala and Jamaica.

After the match against Honduras, Cuba would face Haiti on January 15th, Canada, the 19th, and El Salvador, the 22nd, where leaders of each group qualify directly for the *World Cup* in New Zealand.

Cycling

Cuban cyclist Claudia Baró was the most outstanding in the *3rd Grand Prix of San Luis*, prior career to *II Women Tour* of that city, concluding at the 10th position among the 122 participants.

The route of 76.5 km on Saturday in the town of Juana Koslay was dominated by American Hannah Barnes, from the *United Healthcare* team, escorted by Brazilian Luciene Ferreira (*Funvic*) and Clemilda Fernandes (Selection of *Brazil*), in that order.

The Cuban team, which also consisted of Olympic medalist Yoanka González, Mailín Sánchez, Iraida Garcia and Yeima Torres, ranked 5th among the 19 registered teams, heading that dominated the Brazilian team.

Toronto-2015

Cuba has classified 301 athletes for the Pan-American Games taking place from July 10th to 26th in Toronto, Canada, Cuban sports officials informed today. So far, there are 22 disciplines with continental tickets, reported the director of the department of *High Performance of the Cuban Institute of Sports, (INDER)*, Norge Marrero, cited by the Cuban Information Agency.

Marrero stated that the male and female teams of field hockey head the list of those classified with 32 places, divided into equal amounts (16) for both groups, along with handball, 15 male and 15 female, water polo, 13 for each team, rowing, 18 males 8 females, baseball, 24 places, volleyball, 12 places for each team, shooting with 10 male and 7 female and softball 17.

Other teams have tickets to the event in Toronto, such as women's basketball with 12 places, canoeing with 9 male and 6 female, artistic gymnastics with 6 per team, wrestling with 10 male and 2 female, weight lifting 7 men and a woman, synchronized swimming with 8 women and athletics with 4 male and 3 females.

To these are added the rhythmic gymnastics 7 females, cycling with 6 females, archery with 3 places per team, pentathlon with 2 per team, beach volleyball, with the same amount, karate with 2 men and sailing with 2 men.

According to Marrero, several sports will look forward to their classification in the next few months, including combat sports, and other such as athletics will try to expand its places.

He highlighted that the Cuban delegation's objective is to maintain the 2nd place in the table positions for countries.

Cuban outfielder Alfredo Despaigne Signs 2-year contract with Chiba Lotte Marines

Cuban outfielder Alfredo Despaigne has re-signed with the *Chiba Lotte Marines*, inking a 2-year deal with the *Japanese Pacific League* club.

The team announced the signing on its official website but did not reveal financial terms on Thursday; however, local media reported that the contract is worth \$4.2 million.

Lotte signed Despaigne to a contract in July. The 28-year-old slugger made a smooth transition to Japanese baseball, hitting 12 homers while driving in 33 runs and posting a .311 batting average in 45 games.

Before coming to Japan, Despaigne hit 220 career homers in the *Cuban Baseball League*, and was MVP in the preliminary round of Pool A at the *World Baseball Classic* last year.

De Zurda Honors Fidel Castro and Cuban 5 in Broadcast from Havana

De Zurda, a program broadcast by Telesur, started on Saturday its 2nd Season with a program from Cuba, on which they paid tribute to the leader of the Revolution, Fidel Castro, and the Cuban Five.

Former Argentinian soccer player Diego Armando Maradona and Uruguayan journalist Victor Hugo Morales, the anchors, dedicated part of the program to the relationship between Fidel Castro and Maradona, the return of Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernandez and Ramon Labañino to their homeland, as well as talking about Cuban soccer and the Caribbean island's collaboration to fight Ebola. During the 1-and-a-half-hour program, Maradona recalled the beginning of his relationship with Fidel Castro in 1987, when he traveled to Havana to receive the *Prensa Latina Sports Poll Award* as the *Best Latin American Athlete in 1986*.

Argentinian coach Matias Jesus Almeyda, Uruguayan soccer player Sebastian "El Loco" Abreu and former Cuban high jumper Javier Sotomayor, among others, were among the guests on the program, which also dedicated another moment to the Cuban Five.

Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez and Rene Gonzalez, the Cuban 5, who were detained in South Florida and sentenced to long prison terms for gathering information to prevent terrorist actions against the Cuban people. Saturday's broadcast from Havana was especially dedicated to the Cuban 5.

De Zurda had its 1st Season during the *2014 FIFA World Cup* in Brazil, from June 12th to July 13th. This time, the program aims to analyze the *2015 Americas Cup*, to be held in Chile in June.



Radio Habana Cuba