

Sport News Roundup Feb 26



Baseball

Matanzas regained 1st place in the *54th Cuban Baseball Championship* with its 11-4 victory over Holguin on Wednesday and Granma's defeat facing Ciego de Avila.

Jonder Martinez scored his 10th win for Matanzas' *Los Cocodrilos* to tolerate 5 hits and 1 clean in 7 episodes, supported by offensive of 14 hits, including catcher Andrés Reyna's homer, who hit 4-2, and drove in 3.

The current national runners-up now have 1 game ahead of Granma, which succumbed 15-13 to Ciego de Ávila, with shortstop Yorbis Borroto's prominence offensive for the winning side with 2 homers, both connected in the 5th episode.

Industriales remained in 3rd place by knocking 14-4 to Pinar del Río in 8 chapters, with the 10th victory of veteran Alberto Bicet and highlight batting of Alexander Malleta, 5-3, with a homer, a double and 5 RBIs.

With this defeat, Pinar del Río is 2 games from 4th place, now shared with Ciego de Ávila and Isla de la Juventud, the latter winner over Artemisa with a score of 8-1.

The lefty Darién Núñez led from the mound *Los Piratas'* win by spreading 6 hits and 1 clean in 6 innings, with offensive role of outfielder Yusniel Ibáñez, 3-2, with 1 triple and 4 RBIs.

Following these results, Matanzas commands the Table with 44 and 26, followed by Granma (43-27), Industriales (40-30), Isla de la Juventud and Ciego de Ávila (39-31), Pinar del Río (37-33), Artemisa (35-

35) and Holguin (31-39).

Boxing

Cuba's *Los Domadores* will visit this Friday the *Otamans* of Ukraine with the same quintet that exceeded 4.1 to Mexico's *Los Guerreros* in the *V World Series of Boxing (WSB)*, according to the National Commission of that discipline.

The Caribbean squad will appear at the *Palacio de los Deportes* in Kiev at 2:30 pm (Cuba's time), headed by 2 ranking leaders in their respective divisions, twice world runner Yasnier Toledo (64 kg), and Arlén López (75), after closing unbeaten the first half of the qualifying stage.

The staff also features Erislandy Savon (91), another star aspiring to reach his 4th consecutive success in such competitions while the young Joahnys Argilagos (49) attempts to return to winning path after losing his previous submission to the Mexican Joselito Velazquez, and Andy Cruz (56) will replace the Olympic champion Robeisy Ramírez, after his successful debut.

Protected by 28-fight wins and only 2 setbacks, *Los Domadores* command the *Group A* with 18 points, escorted precisely by the Ukrainian team with 13 units; so this duel between the two could be crucial to define the pointer group during the semifinals.

In the same key, the 7th week also holds the collisions of *Russia* (12) vs. *Lions of Morocco* (9), *British Lion hearts* (8) vs. Mexico's *Los Guerreros* (7) and Algeria's *The Hawks* (0) vs. *Dragons* of China (5), always at the home of the first ones.

Badminton

The Cuban badminton player Osleni Guerrero continues training in Indonesia for the *Giraldilla International Tournament* in Havana, scheduled to be held from March 25th to 29th.

Alexis Ramirez, National Badminton commissioner, told ACN news agency that Guerrero remains training hard to successfully deal with the events of this year that also grant qualifying points to the *Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro 2016*.

At present, Guerrero appears 43rd in the world rankings --his best historical position in the list--, with 29 030 points, to thereby being ratified as leader in the Americas.

American Howard Shu (56), with 25 991 units, escorts the Cuban athlete among the highlights of the American continent.

In 2014, the native of Havana city won the title at the *Pan-American Championships* in Canada, while adding the awards in international tournaments in Venezuela and Peru, and bronze medals at Havana's *La Giraldilla* and the *Grand Prix* of Brazil.

He also won the silver medal in the Central American and Caribbean Games in Veracruz, last November, in the men's individual event, and gold medal with Tahimara Oropeza in mixed doubles.

Volleyball

Cuba and Japan men's volleyball teams, U-23 category, held a friendly match at the *19 de Noviembre Multipurpose Sport Room* in Pinar del Rio city, as part of the preparation of both squads.

Cuba won 3-1 (17-25, 25- 21, 25-13 and 25- 12), and according to Ariel Sainz, Cuban volleyball national commissioner and president of the Cuban Federation of the sport, this was the 2nd match of this kind held in the country from a total of 3.

He added that these are match ups to train the athletes from the Asian nation overlooking the *2020 Tokyo Olympics*, and Cubans to their next international commitments.

Meanwhile, Rodolfo Sanchez, Cuban head coach, stressed the importance of these matches for the young team, and he asserted they aspire to obtain good results in the World League this year.

He also emphasized the collective work of local athletes for the sake of victory, beyond individual results.

Triple jump

First attempt, 17.08 m. Second attempt, 17.13 m, and Guantanamo's triple jumper (1.93 m, 87 kg) put an end to any doubts in Eugene. His record surpassed other set by a Cuban triple jumper: Yoelbi Quesada (17.04 m) in September 19th, 1992 in Seoul.

He behaved very natural when I approached one of his training sessions at the Pan American Stadium. He was there along with her teammate Liadagmis Povea and his trainer Marcos Juvenal.

Nowadays, one concern hovers around his mind and he focused hard on solving the issue: What are the experiences you learnt from 2014? What are your expectations in 2015?

My jump of 17.24 m in Havana last year helped me to get invited to some legs of the Diamond League. It was a very tough competition. I was not supposed to be nervous. But I was. There were many ranked triple jumpers there.

In fact, I performed very well. But the thought of committing fouls was always in my mind. I jumped several times way behind in the plasticine board, and this element plagued me all the season.

I am working hard to stabilize my marks over the 17.40 m-17.50 m. I am only 17, but 2015 is a key season to me. We are talking about the Pan American Games in Toronto and the IAAF World Championship in Beijing. It would be a dream to attend one of those events. There will be a strong rivalry internally. Pedro Pablo Pichardo and Ernesto Reve have both proven international results.

So, are you correcting mistakes?

I am an athlete who depends more on my strength rather than my technique right now. As I acquire maturity, things will be balanced. My efforts right now are addressed to the run-up and takeoff, the transition from the hop to the step, as well as the final jump.

An ideal mix?

I would mix virtues of Jonathan Edwards (18.29), Yoelbi Quesada (17.85), and Ernesto Reve (17.58). Each has his own characteristics. Personally, I prefer the speed of the British, the technique of El Chispa, and the power of Reve.

MARCOS JUVENAL ADDS...

“The key of our work with Lazaro lays in the improvement of his results and stability over the 17-m mark, based on a methodology suitable for his age. We were able to spot that Lazaro was jumping way behind the jumping table.

In order to fix his mistake, we increase the rigor of his fitness in search of major intensities not yet found, as well as the refinement of his run-up.

The instability showed is in line with his age. Therefore, it will be paramount the evolution in the relation running-jumping”.

“Lazaro is a very explosive athlete with a strong jump (6.80 m). When he is able to coordinate it with his own pace, well, we see world-class jumps. He has accepted every suggestion and our dream is to achieve results above the 17.30 m. He will be among those considered to participate in Toronto and Beijing. He has already achieved the IAAF’s qualifying mark. But only two triple jumpers will attend the upcoming events”.

Among his teammates, Lazaro is seen as a future star. All of his results so far place him on top of his category. This is an element to take into account.

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