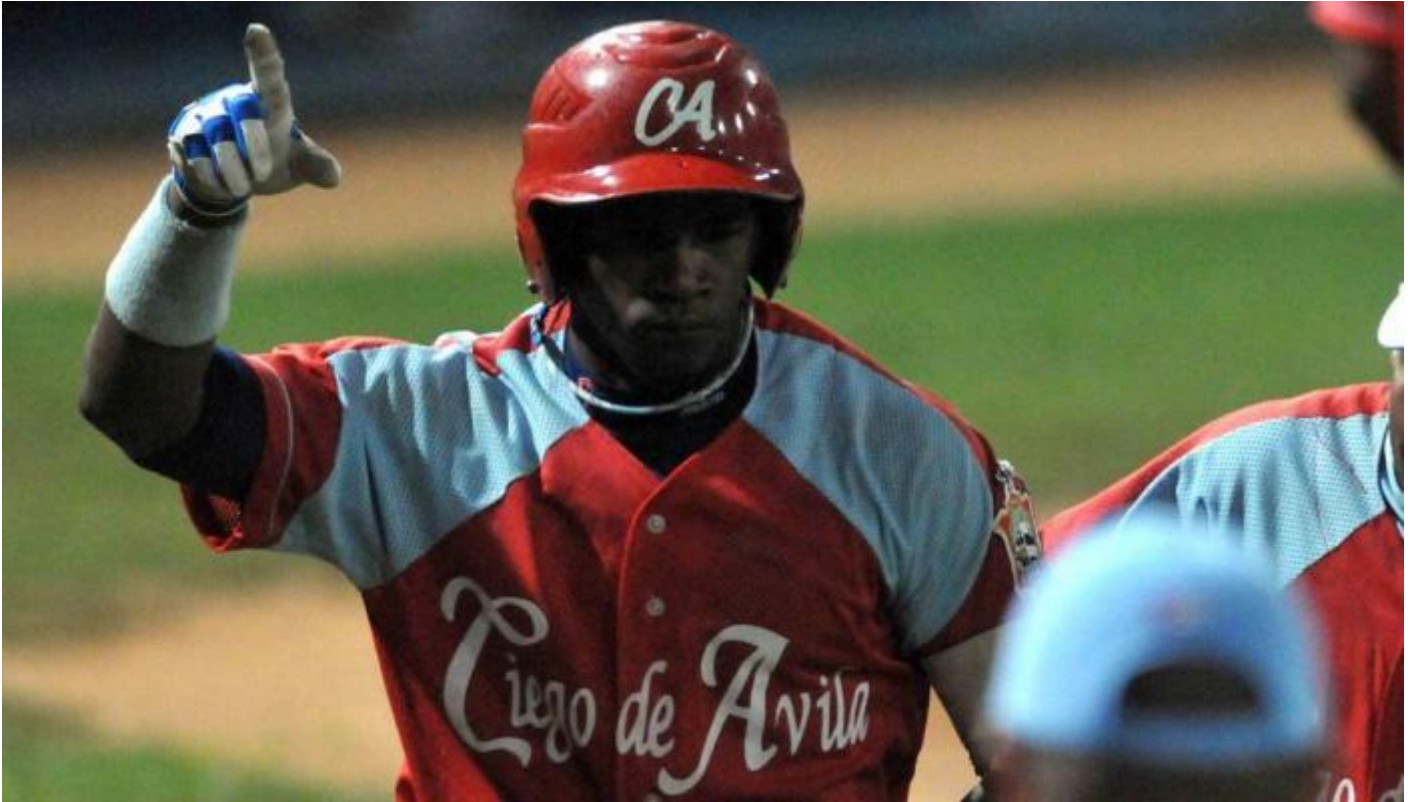


Sport News Roundup March 03



Baseball

Ciego de Ávila remained in 3rd place at the *54th Cuban Baseball Championship* by beating 8-1 to Isla de la Juventud on Monday to be ratified as the best team in the 2nd stage of the *Season*.

It was an excellent performance of the star Vladimir Garcia, who showed signs of recovery by adding his 2nd victory with only 1 clean and 3 hits allowed in 7 episodes.

The catcher Osvaldo Vázquez drove in 3 and shortstop Yorbis Borroto hit 3-2 with a solo homer to lead the Avilanians' *Los Tigres* offensive, who have 6 on-line wins and collect 19-10 at this stage.

Thus, Industriales took the advantage of the *Los Piratas'* failure to climb to 4th place by beating 4-1 to Matanzas leader with the 11th victory of veteran Alberto Bicet and catcher Frank Camilo Morejon's offensive role with 1 home run and 2 RBIs.

In turn, Reutilio Hurtado hit a homer and 2 doubles with 3 RBIs in the Holguin's 6-3 victory over the current monarch, Pinar del Rio, which stayed away 3 games and saw decreased their chances of getting into the post-season games of the *Classification Zone*.

Finally, the runner-up leader, Granma, managed to cluster 8 runs in the 10th inning to beat 14-6 to Artemisa, a clash marked by the star slugger Alfredo Despaigne's 2 runs and 4 trailers.

With 13 days to the definition of the 4 classified teams to play off, Matanzas leads the Table with 47 and 27, followed by Granma (44-30), Ciego de Ávila (43-31), Industriales (42-32), Isla de la Juventud (41-33),

Pinar del Río (39-35), Artemisa (36-38) and Holguín (32-42).

Fencing

Competitors from over 20 countries, including Cuba, have already confirmed their attendance at the traditional *Villa de la Habana Fencing Grand Prix*, from March 13th to 15th.

The halls of the PABEXPO fairgrounds in this capital, will host the strong competition, with the particularity that there will only be actions in foil, and not in sword, as in previous editions.

Mercedes del Risco, national methodologist of that discipline, told local AIN news agency that among nations with the highest representation of athletes are the United States, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Poland and Canada.

She added that for Cuba's foil fencers, the competition will be tough and demanding, but they will try to seize that opportunity in preparation for the *Pan-American Games* in Toronto, Canada.

She also referred to the Cuban participation from April 17th to 26th, at the *Pan-American Fencing Championships*, qualifying tournament for the continental competition on Canadian soil.

She added that this event grants tickets for Toronto's to the top 8 teams (m and f) in each of the arms, covering foil, epee and saber, objectives that Cuba's representatives should get.

Back to the *Villa de la Habana Grand Prix*, the official stressed that the registration of several world foil fencers will honor a lid that, year after year, shows high level and rivalry among the best exponents of America, Europe and Asia today.

So far, other countries registered with contestants are Argentina, Chile, Czech Republic, Britain, Tunisia, Peru, Hungary, Spain, Israel, Ghana, Algeria, Holland, Ireland, Kuwait and Hong Kong.

Gabon's Sports Minister Thanks Cuba for Cooperation

Blaise Louembe, Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Gabon, described as very positive his working visit to Cuba and thanked the cooperation offered to his country.

He said: We are here to renew the contract with *Cubadeportes Company* for us to keep the assistance of Cuban coaches.

He also stressed that to strengthen this cooperation, he toured institutions and centers linked to sports, such as the *Anti-Doping Control Laboratory* and the *Manuel Fajardo University of Science of Physical Culture and Sports*, among others.

13 students of our country have graduated in Cuba and we are interested for a new group of our young people to come here to train as sport and physical culture professionals, since Cuba is an example for the world, Louembe added.

During his stay in Havana the minister held talks with officials from the *National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER)* by its Spanish acronym), and members of the *National Committee of the Young Communist League (UJC)* by its Spanish acronym).



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