

# *Sports New Roundup March 16*

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## **Baseball**

Defending champion Pinar del Río, Industriales and Isla de la Juventud maintain chances of qualifying for the post season after 84 days of *LIV Cuban Baseball Classic*, which recesses today for the last time.

The day before, Pinar del Rio defeated Ciego de Ávila 5x2 largely by 7 excellent chapters of its opener, Eris Casanova, and Andrés Quijala's and William Andres Saavedra's 4 RBIs, respectively.

Isla de la Juventud blanked 5x0 to Holguin with outstanding pitching performance of Yoalkis Cruz (6-7), Héctor Mendoza and Yoandry López, plus offensive highlight of Luis Felipe Rivera (3-3) and Jorge Luis Barcelán (2-1), who boosted 2 runs.

Meanwhile, Industriales suffered its 3rd straight loss at the hands of Granma's *Los Alazanes*, which were imposed 9x2 favored for homers of Yordanis Alarcón and Urmani Guerra --the leader with 21--, and excellent work of lefty Dariel Góngora during 6 chapters.

The day was completed with the triumph of Matanzas 9x2 versus Artemisa, where Luis Yander The O contributed with 4 RBIs and Aníbal Medina's 2 trailers, in addition to connecting 1 homer each.

So, Matanzas leads with balance of 53-31, escorted by Granma (51-33) and Ciego de Ávila (49-35), the 3 already qualified for the post season that begins next March 24th.

Industriales and Isla de la Juventud with 46-38, and Pinar del Río (45-39), will define this Tuesday through Thursday the 4th and last available berth in dispute to advance to the playoffs, while Artemisa

(39-45) and Holguin (35-49) closed the Table with no options.

This Monday is a rest day to conclude the 2nd phase tomorrow with Artemisa-Pinar del Rio, Ciego de Ávila-Matanzas, Granma and Holguín, and Industriales-Isla de la Juventud duels.

## **Basketball**

Capitalinos and Ciego de Ávila teams will discuss the crown of the *Superior Basketball League (LSB)* for men, after defeating Santiago de Cuba and Artemisa, respectively, this Sunday.

Vanier Reyes highlighted for the winners with 20 units, besides being the most effective in rebounds while Yoan Luis Haiti excelled for the Avilianians with 15 points; LSB bronze medal, Osmel Oliva, shone again, this time with 18 points.

The duel for the title will be 1 match for the best in 7 clashes, where the first 2 games will be held in Havana the coming weekend. Then, the Championship will move to Avilianian lands to discuss 3 encounters, and if necessary, returns to Havana to settle the 6th and 7th caps.

Since the *Superior Basketball League* LSB starting included the participation for each province, Ciego de Ávila has qualified for every finals, which has won 8 and lost 1 facing *Capitalinos* in 2010.

## **Fencing**

With the dispute today of the finals for men concludes here the Foil Grand Prix Villa de La Habana, with venue in the fairgrounds PABEXPO, west of the capital.

Among the men present in the lid are the French Enzo Lefort, 3rd-ranked, and American Race Imboden, winner of the contest in 2013 and 4th in the world rankings, and Gerek Meinhardt (5th).

The British James-Andrew Davis (6th), Czech Alexander Choupenicht (7th) and Italian Andrea Cassara (8th), who also seek to demonstrate their quality and talent in the lid.

The Italian Elisa Di Francisca, Olympic champion in London 2012, won the title by defeating Russian Inna Deriglazova 15-5 in the final of the women's foil, celebrated on Saturday.

Di Francisca was not so sure of winning because she had problems in her left ankle, but I'm happy for this victory in Cuba, a country that I love for its sun, climate and people, stressed to the press the foil fencer.

The Italian, 32 and 3rd in the world rankings, went on the attack in the 2nd period more decisively and scored 6 straight points to achieve an advantage not to lose to a narrow victory.

Di Francisca defeated 15-6 in the semifinals Jeon Hee Sook, South Korea; while Deriglazova, seventh universal ladder, 15-10 beat the French Ysaora Thibus.

While also Italian Valentina Vezzali, ranking 2nd and owner of 9 Olympic medals, including 6 gold, was eliminated in the quarterfinals by Thibus 9-15.

Best placed were Latin American Mexican Alely Hernandez in position 50, and Flavia Mormandi Argentina (61), in a contest in which 124 foil fencers competed from over 30 countries.

In total, this year's Grand Prix Villa de La Habana participated over 250 fencers from 42 countries.

## Boxing

None of the Algerian *Desert Hawks*, who "landed" in the ring this Friday at the Ciudad Deportiva, could get airborne under the heavy blows of the Cuba's *Los Domadores*, who confirmed their leadership in *Group A* of the *5th World Boxing Series*.

The evening began with light flyweight Joahnys Argilagos' dissertation of elegant and fast movements around the ring. And when his opponent Zoheir Toudjine was about to throw punches, the lad of only 18 years from Camagüey, dodged them stylishly for a unanimous decision to ensure his third win in 5 starts in the current series.

In the 56 kilograms division, the also young Andy Cruz, who alternates in the contest with the titleholder, the reigning Olympic king, Robeisy Ramirez, comfortably overcame Fahem Hammachi (3-0). As much as he wanted, the Algerian could not find the face or body of the Cuban with his fists.

Then came the bout that generated most expectations in the match. It was the debut of another Cuban rookie Kevin Brown (64kilos). Opposite he had Ahmed Boudiaf, a southpaw who gave him a little in stature. Having considered the first round, in which Kevin was imposing without the pressure, as expected he was gaining in confidence in the rest of the bout. And so it was.

After the third round, the Creole was already the sole owner of the ring and the unanimous 3-0 win defined the match.

If the three lads claimed victories without losing even one round, the middleweight Arlen Lopez was charged to rock the crowd with a barrage of punches in the very first round against Ilyas Abbadi, forcing the referee to declare a TKO.

And finally, Cuba depended on the best fighter of America in 2014, the spectacular Erislandy Savon.

It was hoped that his adversary, Bouziane Houna, would cover up too much. But his fate was sealed. Savon is unbeatable. Except that unlike his previous rivals in the current series, the Falcon himself remained standing during the 5 rounds.

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