

# *Sports News Roundup April 16*

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## **Four Cuban Players Sign to Play Pro Baseball in Canada**

Cuban baseball players Alexei Bell, Ismel Jiménez, Yordan Manduley and Yunieski Gurriel signed contracts today with the *Capitals Québec* of the *Canadian Pro Independent League*, where they will play next season.

Bell, Jiménez, Manduley and Gurriel should join the club on May 9th, in the middle of the preparation for the Canadian tournament, although they would arrive in the country 2 or 3 days before that date.

According to statements by Patrick Scalabrini, manager of the Canadian team, the selection resulted from the interests of the team on the needed personnel -- "we were looking for great players, but also for good people"-- they monitored Cuban baseball and, "of course", they used the criterion of some technical coaches.

"We dedicated much time studying Cuban players and follow the *Cuban National Series*. You may say I'm a fan of the Cuban Baseball Series myself. I talked to several coaches; Lourdes Gurriel helped me a lot. I am very pleased with the players we chose," Scalabrini said here at the protocol on which the contract.

Gurriel, center fielder with the *Industriales* from Havana, is the only contracted on Wednesday with baseball experience in Canada since 2014, and played for the *Capitals*, with which he paid a 321 batting average.

The Canadian competition, with regular schedule between May 21st and September 15th, will not prevent the convening of any baseball for the selection of Cuba to participate in the tournament of the *2015 Pan-American Games* in Toronto, scheduled to be played from July 11th to 19th.

They will be available to the national team if called by technicians. The contract is clear and the parties had no objection to agree, told Prensa Latina Higinio Velez, president of the *Cuban Baseball Federation*.

The preparation process prior to the continental top includes training in Havana and the Cuba-US stop the first July 6th, located in the state of North Carolina.

The Can-Am, name of the professional league in Canada, has no affiliation with *Major League Baseball (MLB)*, but maintains a relationship with the leadership of *Major American Leagues*.

"We will play 10 pre-season games in the US and we do not expect any difficulty for Cubans participate. We have relationships of mutual respect with the MLB and this includes the 4 Cubans belonging to our club, like the rest of the players from other nations who are on the team," said Mr. Scalabrini.

With the talent of Cuban players, *Capital Québec* aspires to contend for the 2015 title after finishing in 3rd place in the last tournament with negative mark of 46-50.

## **Fencing**

18 Cubans will participate in the *Pan-American Fencing Championship* based in Chile from the 18th to 24th next month, announced Mrs. Mercedes del Risco, national methodologist of discipline.

The team of 9 women seek their tickets for *Toronto-2015*, noted the expert to the National Information Agency.

According to the executive, the tournament gives quotas to the first 8 sets of both sexes in foil, épée and saber, for which they must face the excellent US teams –the best in the region with several athletes ranked among the best in the world-- as well as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.

Cubans must also take the opportunity to add points to the global ranking, in a contest that will award 48 points to the winners in each of the modalities.

## **AIBA Becomes the Exclusive Partner for all Cuban Boxers**

*The International Boxing Association (AIBA)* made history today by becoming the exclusive partner for all Cuban boxers from the Cuban Boxing Federation whenever they compete in international boxing competitions, the Sports Campus reports.

A memorandum signed today between AIBA and the Cuban Boxing Federation (FCB) commits that all FCB boxers will only compete in AIBA-approved competitions, including the World Series of Boxing (WSB) and AIBA Pro Boxing (APB).

Both AIBA and the FCB have agreed that Cuban boxers will not be allowed to compete in any non-AIBA professional boxing competitions in order to protect them from being exploited by professional promoters as diplomatic doors with Cuba begin to open.

Ahead of the British *Lionheart's* final home match against the Cuba's *Los Domadores* to be held tonight, AIBA President Dr. Ching-Kuo Wu welcomed the two teams, as well as representatives from both GB Boxing and Cuba Boxing Federation, to the *ArcelorMittal Orbital* to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations.

AIBA President, Dr Ching-Kuo Wu was proud to mark the future union. "Signing this memorandum with the Cuban Boxing Federation is a significant step in AIBA's history, and it highlights our commitment to supporting the very best boxing talent in the world. We are very grateful for the trust and commitment shown by FCB toward our organization."

President of Cuba Boxing Federation Mr. Alberto Puig de la Barca also expressed his delight at the signing of the memorandum. "Today is an important day for the development of Cuban boxing and I am happy to be a part of this historic event for our sport. This agreement will ensure that Cuban boxing continues to grow and prosper all over the world," he said.

With the British *Lionhearts* vs. Cuba's *Los Domadores* match-up taking place at the *Copper Box Arena*, the event was made even more significant by its location *on the* Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, home of the *London 2012 Olympics*, reminding many of the young boxers of their Olympic goals.

Cuba's *Los Domadores* will face off the British *Lion Hearts* today during the closing the group stage of the *5th World Series of Boxing*.

The Cubans, defending champions, will attempt to keep their undefeated status with those boxers included in the so-called *C-1 format categories*.

Let's recall that with their win over Mexico's *Los Guerreros* last weekend, Cubans claimed 1st place in *Group A* and their direct ticket for the semifinal classification.

The pupils of prof. Rolando Acebal also hope to score as many possible berths for *Rio de Janeiro-2016*, something only gotten by the ranking leaders.

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