

Sports News Roundup November 11



Baseball

Cuba beat Netherlands by a score of 6 to 5 to get its 1st victory at the *2015 WBSC Premier 12 Baseball Tournament*, played in Chinese Taipei and Japan from November 8th to the 21st.

An excellent 4-innings relay of closer José Ángel García, who faced 15 batters, prescribed 3 strikeouts and did not allow annotations, was vital in the victory of the Cuban team, while the defining run came in the 8th chapter, produced by Yosvani Alarcon's single to left field with runners on 2nd and 3rd bases.

It was a tough game where the Cubans took the lead in the 2nd inning by Alexander Malleta's double, Yosvani Alarcón's single, and sacrifice fly by Stayler Hernández against starter Jair Jurrjens.

For his part, pitcher Frank Montieth began the game for Cuba and threw the first 2 chapters perfectly, but in the 3rd gave 1 ticket, made a balk, and endured 3 hits, which produced the first 2 runs for the Netherlands.

An inning later, Montieth returned vulnerable and tolerated a single by left fielder Curt Smith, and catcher Shawn Zarraga's homer, with which Netherlands was placed in front by a score of 4x1.

Cuba's offensive took over the 6th inning with singles from brothers Lourdes and Yulieski Gourriel, Alfredo Despaigne's double and Stayler Hernandez' homer, all against starter Jurrjens.

However, the advantage was short-lived, since in the next offensive opportunity Holland tied the score at 5 after taking advantage of 1 single of Andrew Jones, another balk, this time of Miguel Lahera, and a wild pitch by José Ángel García.

However, thereafter, García leaned on his slider placed in the bottom of the strike zone to maintain the minimum lead to win. The defeat was for Juan Carlos Sulbarán, the 2nd of 5 Dutch pitchers in the game, who worked 1 inning and charged with the defining run.

Right fielder Stayler Hernández, 3-2, with 1 homer and 3 RBIs, led the winning drive, also supported by Yulieski Gourriel, Despaigne and Alarcón, each with 2 hits while Carlton Daal, 4-3, with 1 driven in, and Smith, 4-2, with 1 run scored, commanded the attack. Now, Cuba and the Netherlands are tied in *Group A* with 1 win and 1 loss each.

And last but not least regarding the national sport of all Cubans, US Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred is currently trying to work out a deal to have a *Major League Baseball Spring* exhibition game in Cuba. And if it all comes through, the New York *Yankees* hope to be 1 of the 2 teams making their way to Cuba for the event.

According to Joel Sherman of the *New York Post*, the *Yankees* are one of 10 teams being considered for an exhibition game in Cuba if the final hurdle can be cleared in order to have the games held in Havana.

Many baseball teams were interested in the chance of coming to Cuba, but with time going by, many of them have dropped out; however, the *Yankees* have still expressed interest, and if the exhibition game becomes official, *Major League Baseball* will use a lottery system to pick the two teams.

The last game played in Cuba was in 1999 when the *Baltimore Orioles* played in Havana against the Cuban national team. *MLB Spring Training camps* were held in Cuba before 1959 before the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

This wouldn't be the first time the *Yankees* played an exhibition game out of the country. In 2014, the *Yankees* played a two-game series against the *Miami Marlins* in Panama City, the birth place of their former closer Mariano Rivera.

Triathlon

The Spanish Marisol Casado, *President of the International Triathlon Union*, will visit Cuba from November 13th to the 16th.

Casado, also a member of the *International Olympic Committee (IOC)*, will hold a press conference in which she will officially inaugurate the *International Triathlon of Havana*, whose 2nd version will run on the 13th and 14th February next year in Havana.

The fair will feature the *sprint*, *middle* and *long distance* events in which *sprint* will have the Pan-American Cup category, which will contribute to the ranking points for the Olympic qualifier in *Rio de Janeiro'16*, starting and finishing at the *Marina Hemingway* in Havana.

Judo

10 Cubans judokas, 5 of each sex, will participate in the 3 premier tournaments in China, South Korea and Japan in the closing of the international calendar of the *International Judo Federation* for this year.

The women will be Dayaris Mestre (48 kg), Aliuska Ojeda (57), Maricet Espinosa (63), Yalennis Castillo (78), and Idalys Ortiz (+78), under the direction of Armando Padrón, while males chosen are Magdiel Estrada (73), Iván Silva (81), Asley González (90), José Armenteros (100), and Alex García (+100), all led by Justo Noda.

They all leave next Sunday with a view to compete in the *Grand Prix of China*, scheduled from 20th-22nd this month, and then will cope with the *Grand Prix of South Korea*, the on the 26th, 27th and 28th to close at the *Grand Slam of Tokyo*, Japan, from December 5th-6th.

These lids represent an excellent warm up and even greater chances of qualifying for *Rio de Janeiro'16*, thus far only reserved for Idalys Ortiz (4th), Asley González (18th) and Jose Armenteros (14th) in their respective divisions.

More distant are Mestre (23), Ojeda (46), Espinosa (36), Castillo (35), Estrada (33), Silva (46) and Garcia (39), to access the Olympics, which only grants 14 direct seats by ranking for women and 22 in the case of men.

Since the *Grand Prix* gives 300 units to the winners and *Grand Slam* 500, athletes remaining aspirants are facing the challenge of seeking the highest score for a list whose headline is on May 1st, 2016.

Then surely the best opportunities will be at the *Grand Prix of Havana* from January 22nd-24th, and the *Pan-American Championship* to be held in April next year.

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