

# *Sports News Roundup November 17*

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## **Baseball**

The Cuban national baseball team will play 19 regular-season games in the independent Can-Am League next year.

The league released its 2016 schedule, which includes the Cuban national team and an all-star squad from the Japanese Shikoku Island league.

Between June 9th-30th, Cuba will play 3 and 4-game series against all 6 teams in the Can-Am League based in New Jersey, New York, Ottawa and Quebec.

"We are thrilled to be able to showcase two great international teams," said league commissioner Miles Wolff said Thursday. "We are honored that the Cuban national team respects the Can-Am League and will send their best team."

Cuba and the U.S. have begun to restore diplomatic ties, and both countries re-established their respective embassies in July.

Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred said this week he remains hopeful a big league team will play an exhibition game in Cuba during spring training.

### **Softball**

Santiago de Cuba is going before with 3 wins and no losses in the 4th edition of the *19 de Noviembre Softball Women's U-18 Cup*, underway in the municipality of Jobabo, eastern province of Las Tunas, with the participation of 7 local provinces.

In their 1st appearance the indomitable made a super 18-0 knockout to Camagüey, which could not connect to Dainaris Garcia's pitching. The other 2 victories of Santiago's girls were also by super knockouts to Pinar del Río del Río and Ciego de Ávila, with scores 23-3 and 15-0, respectively.

In the 2nd position are Granma's young girls, who in their 1st play gave another super knockout to Las Tunas (20-2) and then defeated Sancti Spiritus 9x4.

The final of the tournament, under the *Round Robin System*, will take place on the 18th at the *Batalla de Palo Seco Stadium*, where it is expected that Santiago de Cuba and Granma discuss the gold again, as in the previous edition, when the first ones took the crown.

The event, to salute the *Day of Physical Education and Sports*, is used for that members of the women's national softball staff, made preparatory meetings with the youth team of boys from the Jobabo town.

### **Judo**

The Cuban men's and women's teams will leave for China on Sunday to compete in the *Grand Prix* from November 20th-22nd, the first stopover of an Asian tour.

Among the ten athletes are Olympic and World medalists Idalis Ortiz (+78 kilograms) and Asley González (90 kg).

The women's team is made up of Dayaris Mestre (48), Aliuska Ojeda (57), Maricet Espinosa (63) and Yalennis Castillo (78), while the men's team also includes Magdiel Estrada (73), Iván Silva (81), José Armenteros (100) and Alex García (+100).

The Asian tour, whose main objective is to score points for the world ranking, will also include South Korea, where another *Grand Prix* will also be held from November 26-28, and Japan, which will host its traditional *Grand Slam* from December 6-8.

The best 22 male and 14 female judokas will compete in Rio de Janeiro 2016, on the condition that no country can take more than 1 judoka per division.

## **Diego Maradona Recovering Well**

Argentinean football great Diego Maradona underwent a gastric bypass in the western Venezuelan city of Maracaibo over the weekend and is recovering well, according to his doctors.

The 55-year-old former World Cup winner went through a similar operation around a decade ago and has battled ill health since his soccer heyday in the 1980s.

'He is walking and in good spirits and will remain in Venezuela for at least 12 more days to recover,' said Carlos Felipe Chaux, one of the surgeons who treated him, told reporters at a Maracaibo hotel.

### **Isinbayeva and Other Russian Champs Ask IAAF to Rectify Decision**

Two-time Olympic Champion in pole vault Yelena Isinbayeva is now heading a list of stars of the Russian track and field who requested "not to kill their dream to compete internationally" in a letter to the International Athletics Associations Federation (IAAF).

The letter was addressed to IAAF president Sebastian Coe and the members of the IAAF council, and calls for rectifying the sanction that might stop Russia from competing in the next Olympic Games, represented by those athletes who never took banned substances.

The crisis was produced by the report issued by an investigating committee of the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) accusing a group of Russian athletes and sport authorities of violating the rules.

This commission recommended the suspension that IAAF confirmed last Friday, which stops all the programs of the Russian Athletics Federation, including the possibility that all the Russian athletes stay out of competition in the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016.

"We can not imagine our lives without athletics. We live with the ability to train and compete with the best athletes in the world, with a dream to participate in the Olympic Games in Rio," says the letter released today at a press conference.

The signatories stated they fully support the hard work to clean the sport of doping, "laborious work by the WADA, the IAAF and the Russian Federation," and requested that the guilty people are punished without looking at their titles or the position they occupy.

During the press conference in which participated Isinbaeva, the high jump Olympic champion Anna Chicherova and world champion in the 110 hurdle meters Serguei Shubenkov, explained that among the signatories of the letter include holders who began his career in 1999 and now cuarte or training for his fifth Olympics.

Next to them, the document explains, athletes who aspire to participate in its first Olympics are also prepared very young.

The signatories are all united by "the perfect reputation, especially in monitoring the anti-doping code and zero tolerance "to the use of these illegal substances.

The warning letter against the disqualification of the FRA, a decision that can isolate many young stars that can be seen deprived of competing in world and European in their youth and children categories tournaments.

"We can not believe that the Council think that this decision is right," says the letter signed by 15 Olympic champions, world, European and medalists in these instances.

"We ask them not to kill our dream," says the text that invokes Coe, Sergei Bubka, Alberto Juantorena and other global glories of the game, who are now part of the IAAF Council.

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**Radio Habana Cuba**