

Sports News Roundup December 18



55th Cuban Baseball Series

Las Tunas and Matanzas completed a slide on Thursday in the first of a three-game sub-series in the second phase of the 55th Cuban Baseball Series.

Las Tunas' Leñadores led by coach Ermidelio Urrutia achieved three consecutive wins over Isla de la Juventud on Thursday's game by shutout 8-0. Pitcher Yoen Socarras, a reinforcement from Sancti Spiritus, pleased the fans at Julio Antonio Mella stadium with one of the best pitching games of his career allowing only two hits in seven innings with four strikeouts and allowed no walks.

Matanzas' Cocodrilos defeated Holguin also by shutout 7-0 with exceptional offensive of 11 hits and supported by the great pitching of Danny Betancourt, who reached the record of five wins and allowed four hits in six innings and stroke out six. Centerfielder Ernesto Blanco batted three hits including a double and a triple to drive in four runs for his team.

Industriales delivered a great offensive of 13 hits, including three home runs, to beat the leader and current champion Ciego de Avila by a score of 8-5 and prevented a slide in the three-game sub series. First base Alexander Malleta hit a double and a homer and drove in three runs as reliever Héctor Ponce did not allow hits in four innings of pitching to achieve his ninth saved game.

Pinar del Rio's Vegueros, after withstanding two defeats, beat Granma's Alazanes 7-3 with the best offensive of the game by Dennis Laza who hit a triple and a home run to drive in four runs.

Teams will rest on Friday but will resume the subseries on Saturday as Ciego de Ávila takes on Isla de la Juventud, Las Tunas plays Matanzas, Holguín rivals Pinar del Río and Granma challenges Industriales.

Baseball Clinic in Matanzas MLB-FCB

A baseball joint clinic session with the participation of children under 12 years of age was performed by players of Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Baseball Federation on Thursday, as part of an academic exchange between the two sports institutions.

A total of 150 children from three municipalities of Matanzas (west of Cuba) took part in the event, receiving training sessions in five items: catching the ball, pitching, infield defense, outfield defense, and batting.

The event was at open doors, free for the audience, at Victoria de Giron Stadium, the home Matanzas' Cocodrilos team.

Previous to the clinic, US pitcher Clayton Kershaw, representing the MLB Players Association, thanked the invitation to visit Cuba, regarded the work with children as "fantastic" and stated that "making it in Cuba, makes it much more special."

The former player of Cuban national teams and Industriales team, Pedro Medina, thanked the MLB athletes and sports glories of Cuba for teaching young children the basics of the ball game.

Joe Torre, a prominent former MLB player and manager, told reporters he is very pleased with the visit and underlined that he has been very well received in this country. "The main message is the passion we share (the two nations) for baseball," said the member of the US Hall of Fame.

Chess

GM Lazaro Bruzon, 2666 Elo and 76 in the world ranking, will try to achieve his fourth crown in the Carlos Torre Memorial chess tournament, which opened on Thursday in Merida, Mexico.

Bruzon won twice on Thursday during the first day of the tournament. He beat Ukrainian Irina Andrenko and Cuban Michel Díaz.

The second best player in Cuba won his first title in 2005 and repeated consecutive win in 2013 and 2014.

There will be nine rounds through the Swiss system and there are 113 players registered from 12 countries, including 60 Mexicans and 33 Cubans.

Switzerland Blocks Money Linked to FIFA Scandal

Switzerland blocked over 50 million Swiss Francs (50 million USD) in several bank accounts linked to the corruption scandal of the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA).

The measure responds to a petition by the United States, whose legal system launched a great investigation against the soccer organization and asked for information on 50 bank accounts open in about ten banks.

The total of blocked funds is estimated between 50 to 100 million dollars, according to the Swiss paper, which quotes statements of the spokesman of the Federal Office of Justice in Berna, Folco Galli.

Until this moment, 41 FIFA officials have been accused of corruption, of which nine were arrested in Zürich when the scandal became public.

A group of officials had or have bank accounts in Switzerland and several sports marketing societies are implicated in the scandal operated financially from Zürich.

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