

Sports News Roundup Jan. 13



Baseball

Industriales came out ahead in the attractive bilateral match against Matanzas to overcome the current national runner-up on Monday by 6-2 to reach 30 wins in the *54th Cuban Baseball Championships*.

Industriales' offensive deployed 14 hits to support a sober veteran pitching performance of Frank Monthiet, who only allowed 4 hits and 1 clean in 6 episodes, while Jonder Martínez took the loss.

Rudy Reyes and Felix Carbonell shone at bat for the winners with 1 homer each, together with the star 3rd baseman Yulieski Gourriel, who hit 5-4, including 1 double and 2 runs scored.

Meanwhile, after suffering 6 straight losses, Isla de la Juventud exceeded as host to Ciego de Avila by 6-4 on Monday to achieve their 1st victory in the 2nd stage of the Championship, successful registration of Darien Núñez and offensive highlight for outfielder Rodmy Proenza.

So, Granma was consolidated in the 2nd place by beating Artemisa 13-5 thanks to an overwhelming artillery attack of 17 hits, including homers by Alfredo Despaigne, Yulexis la Rosa and Yordanis Alarcón, while Dariel Góngora added his 4th victory.

At the other evening game, Holguín exceeded by narrow margin of 10-9 to Pinar del Río, with offensive role for the winning side of the starter Yeison Pacheco, 5-3, with 4 trailers, seconded by 1 homer and 3 runs scored by shortstop Yordán Manduley.

Matanzas now leads with 36 wins and 16 losses, ahead of Granma (32-20), Industriales (30-22), Pinar del Río (29-23), Artemisa (28-24), Ciego de Ávila (28-24), Isla de la Juventud (28-24) and Holguín (25-27).

Cycling

The Cuban road cycling squad will look to move up the standings, both in *individual* and *team* categories, when starting today the 5th stage of the 50th edition of the *Vuelta al Tachira*, in Venezuela.

The disciples of Lisardo Benítez are required to move up the standings, as they appear in the penultimate position by teams, among the 18 participating teams, and its best man is ranked 56th among the 132 riders still competing.

Today 158.1 km will be run between the regions of Santa Cruz de Mora y Colón, a circuit that includes in its route with 4 sprints and 1 mountain award.

On Monday, the Italian Jakub Mareczko (*Yellow Flow* team) dominated the 4th stage of 124.4 km. between Guanare and Barinas, to repeat his victory won in the 3rd date of competition.

For its part, the Cuban road cycling squad, led by Olympic medalist Yoanka González, came in 5th among the 19 participants after traveling the initial 2-stage of the *II Women Tour* of San Luis, Argentina.

Today, the Cubans will seek to maintain or improve their commendable step to meet the 3rd stage of 75 km. of the mountain path in the town of Merlo.

The contest, category 2.2 by the *International Cycling Union*, gathers 122 riders from 19 national and international teams, who will travel over 390 km divided into 6 stages.

Basketball

Basketball lovers in Cuba will be delighted with today' kickoff of the *Superior Basketball League*, male branch, between the local Avilanian "Buffaloes" and Capitalinos, to be played in the city of Ciego de Avila.

Champions and runners-up will be in action this evening at the *Giraldo Cordova Cardin* indoor room, in the provincial capital of Ciego de Avila, said Alfredo Cartaya, commissioner of the sport in the province.

The event also includes teams from Camagüey, Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, Artemisa, Pinar del Río and Las Tunas, while the women's team will bump into Villa Clara-Havana, Pinar del Río-Artemisa, Camaguey and Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo vs. Santi Spiritus, also at the headquarters of the former.

The Superior League began in 1993 and until today, Ciego de Ávila and Capitalinos teams have won the most number of plays.

CONCACAF U-20 Championship

Honduras broke open a scoreless stalemate by striking twice within 5 minutes in the 2nd half en route to a 3-0 *Group B* victory over Cuba in the *CONCACAF Under-20 Championship* on Monday.

Alberth Elis, John Suazo and Jhow Benavidez tallied in the 2nd half at the *Montego Bay Sports Complex*.

The Hondurans (1-1-0, 4 points) remained unbeaten, while Cuba (0-0-2, 0 points) is still looking for its 1st point.

Goalkeeper Roberto Lopez secured the shutout, although defender Luis Santos made the defensive of the game for the Central Americans in the 78th minute. An onrushing Frank Lopez fired a shot that got

past Lopez, but Santos managed to clear it off the line and out of bounds for a corner kick.

Elis opened the scoring in 60th minute against goalkeeper Delvis Lumpuy, who had entered the match a minute prior for the injured Eller Pozo. It was 18-year-old's second goal in as many games, having found the back of the net in Saturday's 2-2 draw with El Salvador.

Five minutes later, Suazo, a 2nd-half substitute, scored from 8 yards to give the Catrachos a 2-goal advantage. Benavidez added a goal off a counterattack in the 82nd minute.

Cuba produced the 1st scoring chance in the 8th minute, when Lopez parried a shot off the crossbar. Roberney Caballero swooped in to bury the rebound from 6 yards, but he was ruled to be offside.

In the 30th minute, Elis missed a great opportunity, heading a left-wing feed from point-blank range wide right of the net.

Benavidez tried to chip Pozo from midfield in the 23rd minute, only to see his attempt sail just over the net. Cuban captain David Urgelles was denied as his close-range header was knocked away by Lopez.

Honduras will meet Mexico in the 3rd *Group B* date on Thursday while Haiti takes on Cuba.

FIFA's 2014 Ballon d'Or and Others

Cristiano Ronaldo has been named *FIFA's 2014 Ballon d'Or* winner, beating Lionel Messi and Manuel Neuer to football's most coveted individual prize.

Ronaldo has scored 31 goals and contributed 10 assists across 22 appearances in *La Liga* and the *Champions League* this season, per www.whoscored.com.

He netted a combined total of 48 strikes and 13 assists during those competitions in 2013-14, highlighting his outrageous knack to have an impact on matches.

His 17 strikes in last season's Champions League set a new benchmark for Europe's top players to try to surpass. That tally coincided with Madrid's long-awaited La Decima win, which saw Ronaldo net the final goal in Los Blancos' 4-1 Champions League final victory over city rivals Atletico Madrid.

One low point of Ronaldo's 2014 came in the build-up to the World Cup. He struggled with niggling injury problems as the club season came to a close and was unable to perform at his best during Portugal's ill-fated stint in Brazil.

Ronaldo scored one goal during the tournament, but his nation failed to escape a tough group which included the United States, Ghana and eventual winners Germany. Neuer and Messi won the *Golden Gloves* and *Golden Ball Awards* at the *World Cup*, respectively.

Ronaldo has notched one goal and an assist in his 3 appearances since the turn of the year, 1 strike behind Messi's return in the same number of games.

And another from football says that Colombian footballer James Rodriguez won today the the *Fifa Puskas Award* for the *Best Goal of 2014*, delivered at the *Balon d'or gala* held in Zurich, Switzerland.

The Colombian's effort that came at the quarter-final of the World Cup Brazil 2014 against Uruguay was selected by the users of www.FIFA.com and of the *France Football* French magazine as the best of the year 2014.

James' goal was one of the most spectacular in the World Cup 2014, where he received the ball from the center, stopped it with his chest with his back to goal and sent the ball with his left foot to the score area.

James beat Dutch Robin Van Persie, with his diving headed against Spain in the first day of the World Cup (5-1) and Irish Stephanie Roche, the only woman among the 10 nominees and whose goal in the local female championship has had a major impact on the INTERNET.

The Puskas Award, created five years ago by the FIFA in memory of the late captain of the legendary Hungarian team of the 1950s.

The previous winners of this award were Portuguese Cristiano Ronaldo, Turkish Hamit Altintop, Brazilian Neymar, Slovak Miroslav Stoch and Swedish Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

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