

Sports News Roundup March 18



Baseball

Isla de la Juventud defeated Industriales and woke up in 4th place of the *Classification Zone*, last berth of access to post-season, 2 days to conclude the regular schedule of the *54th Cuban Baseball Classic*.

On Tuesday, *Los Piratas* relied on 3 runs and the combined work of 4 pitchers to win Industriales 7-4 at the *Latinoamericano Stadium* and break a tie with their current victims.

Luis Felipe Rivera, Jorge Luis Barcelán and Yusnier Ibanez homered, each with 1 rider on board to lead the winners, a team with the lowest offensive in production of homers among the 8 ranked teams in the 2nd phase of the tournament, where Jesus, Danny Aguilera and Hector Mendoza excelled from the bullpen to make the last 8 outs scoreless despite giving away 3 tickets and accepting 3 combined hits.

Thus, Isla de la Juventud has 47 wins with 38 defeats, 1 more than Industriales and the defending champion Pinar del Río, which imposed on Artemisa 13-5 in the only

evening challenge.

Now, a combination of 2 wins from Isla de la Juventud and 3 from Pinar del Río will lead a draw, but Pinar would take the ticket as it prevailed 5-4 in their bilateral subset; while Industriales is bound to win the 2 remaining games.

In other stops, Matanzas beat Ciego de Ávila 14x4 in 7 innings and Granma defeated 4x2 to Holguin; thus, Matanzas commands with 54-31, escorted by Granma (52-33), Ciego de Ávila (49-36) and Isla de la Juventud (47-38).

Pinar del Río and Industriales are embraced in the 5th with 46-39, and Artemisa (39-46) and Holguin (35-50) complete the *Table* without options.

The same Tuesday's duels will be repeated today Wednesday to be concluded on Thursday, when each team will have played 87 games.

Volleyball

Cuba achieved an important victory over Puerto Rico 25-18, 25-12, 18-25, and 25-18 in an exciting game in *Pool B* of the *III U18 Girls' Pan-American Volleyball Cup* from which the holder of the last available ticket to the *World Championship* will come up.

At the Sports City the local team, acclaimed by its audience, dominated the two first sets; nevertheless they took the initiative again to achieve their first victory.

The score was led by the host players Diaris Pérez (13), Heidy Casanova and Kitania Medina (both, 11), and Gretell Moreno (10). On the Puerto Rican side, Dariana Hollingsworth was the only one who had a double-digit tally (14).

Tomás Fernández, the Cuban coach, expressed that “this game meant a lot. We made the first step and avenged the result of the last year when Puerto Rico defeated us in the U20 Cup. It doesn't mean we think the other commitments are easy, but my team has potential, though it got even on my nerves and they were much concerned about spiking and neglected the reception.”

The Puerto Rican coach, Luis Aponte, recognized the Cuban superiority in the 2 first sets, “we made some adjustments in the game planning and eventually it worked out. We knew our rivals were extremely strong and we bet on the service as they are good at spiking and they also had difficulty in the receiving. Nevertheless, they were able to stabilize it and with their power they dominated us.”

The captain, Joyscelyn Coronel, said that “it was a complicated match that we could have won; however, we lacked more effusiveness in the court, as well as communication and intensity as they are taller and stronger than us, but with our mentality we could have defeated them.”

Table tennis

Cuban table tennis players (w) defeated Jamaica and the Dominican Republic and qualified for the *Pan-American Games* to be held in Toronto, Canada.

In the city of Buenos Aires, the island athletes started their outstanding performance with a win of our best player, Leisy Jimenez, who beat 3-0 (11-6, 11-8, and 12-10) Jamaican Shenique Clare.

Veteran Lisi Castillo won the 2nd match 3-0 versus Yvonne Foster, while duet Idalys Lovet-Jimenez also defeated 3-0 Onika Francis-Foster, to secure the win. Despite being considered favorites to lead the standing, Cuba won easily against the Dominican Republic.

Castillo beat Eva Brito 3-0 (13-11, 12-10, 11-9). Jimenez defeated Karla Brito 3-0 (11-3, 11-2, 11-6) and duet Lovet-Jimenez swept Yasiris Ortiz-Karla (11-5, 11-3, 12-10).

Despite the loss, the Dominican team also qualified to the Canadian games after beating Jamaica 3-2.

In Central America, Mexico and Guatemala also won their tickets. Meanwhile, Chile and Colombia got the South American ticket.

Boxing

It remains for Cuba's *Los Domadores* to go through the qualifying stage of the *V World Series of Boxing*. They still miss, but it seems extremely difficult they will not lead the franchise *Group A* and enlist directly

in the semifinals of the event, as dictated by the regulations.

The fight continued this weekend, and *Los Domadores* reminisced about their start by sweeping, uncompromising in the scrimmage, the Algeria's *Desert Falcons*, visitors in Havana.

Again, at home and before their people, *Los Domadores* came to the *Sports City's Coliseum*, where also were without headers Teofilo Stevenson, Angel Herrera, Emilio Correa, José Gómez and dozens more glories.

On this occasion, but bare-chested, new gladiators want to emulate and endorse the story that others one day wrote. It was so they annihilated 5-0 *the Hawks* who do not take flight and continues sunk in the table.

Looser than he was before we saw the light flyweight Jhoanys Argilagos (49 kg), willing to get off the ring happy. His rival, with mediocre boxing arguments seemed to be handcuffed. The best youth athlete of 2013 gave no respite to Zoheir Toudjine and with his demonstration of confidence and skill, he made it clear that much remains for his to show at his 18 years of life.

The second bout of the evening, at 56 kilos, had an exponent that has so far proved a great boxer. Andy Cruz, Matanzas birth, walked the distance against Fahem Hammachi.

Substituting for the third consecutive match in the format C-1 Olympic champion Robeysi Ramirez, the Cuban 2nd best boxer in the division reached for another easy and convincing success; a clear sign of his aspirations to steal the show in the category.

Kevin Brown, 3rd on the under card, replaced late the twice runner-up of the world Yasnier Toledo. It was a decision that took most of us by surprise, even if the final verdict threw up the same sentence. The young man of 64 kilos, world junior champion, won by wide lead against his rival Ahmed Boudiaf, apparently without nerves and losing focus.

The fourth duel of the middleweights was fleeting. Arlen Lopez (75), perhaps annoyed by his timid preceding output, retaliated with Ilyas Abbadi, supposedly the best of the Algerian squad, but saw its undefeated streak of months fell in just seconds.

So, with the 4-0, the night was propitious to see the newly elected best boxer of America in 2014. Erislandy Savon (91), intractable in his last presentations in any competitive environment, without many mishaps settled the Algerian Bouziane Houna, who by just reaching the end had a positive presentation.

Thus, Bouziane became the first cruise that travels the 5 rounds against who also was selected the best boxer in the 4th edition of the universal team competition.

With this sweep, the Cubans remained unbeaten in 9 appearances and show favorable balance of 40 wins and only 5 defeats.

The next match will be against Russia, the upcoming March 20th in Moscow. It will be a tricky duel since the Europeans are 2nd in *Group A*, ahead of Otamans of Ukraine.

Los Domadores, meanwhile, maintains perfect performance of 27 points, but do not get over-confident: the goal is still far away and achieving Olympic tickets is another purpose to fulfill.



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