

Sports News Roundup March 20



Cuban Baseball

The Isla de la Juventud's Piratas completed a slide over Industriales on late Thursday, with another dramatic 6-5 win again decided in the ninth inning, and advanced to the playoffs of the Cuban baseball series.

The Piratas's win left the reigning champion, Pinar del Río, one game out of the playoffs after winning their final three-game series over Artemisa.

Isla de la Juventud joined Matanzas, Granma and Ciego de Avila, already qualified.

VOLLEYBALL

After its success over Chile, Cuba beat Costa Rica three sets to zero and won the only place available in group B to qualify for the world championship in 2015 as part of the Pan American Volleyball Cup for women at the under 18 category.

The Cuban team had beaten Chile in three sets on Wednesday.

The Cuban Victory seemed almost certain since Costa Ricans had not scored even 15 points in any set before their previous rivals.

Baseball

Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred has declared his intention to play an exhibition game in Cuba in 2016 even though a Cuban baseball official said the two sides have yet to start talks.

Commissioner Rob Manfred told the Wall Street Journal on Thursday that MLB was likely to play an exhibition game in Cuba in early 2016.

A Cuban baseball official said any talks would be dependent on the outcome of the ongoing negotiations between Havana and Washington.

"That may be their will, but we have not had any conversations. There is no agreement," said Antonio Diaz, spokesman for the National Baseball Directorate.

The United States and Cuba are attempting to end more than half a century of confrontation and restore diplomatic ties, a step that could lead to normal trade and travel relations.

Soccer: UEFA Champions League Draw.

The Champions League quarter-final draw served up a Madrid derby and one more chance for Zlatan Ibrahimovic to upset Barcelona. We look at who is likely to make it into the last four as English clubs watch on from afar.

PSG do not have to look far for an example of what to do – and what not to do – against Barcelona. In September, [the French side beat the Catalans 3-2 at home](#) in the group stages without Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who was injured back then and will be suspended for the first leg of the quarter-final.

[Barcelona deservedly won the return match 3-1 in December](#) even though Ibrahimovic opened the scoring.

"Strength and courage" will be needed by Paris Saint-Germain according to Edinson Cavani as they renew acquaintances with FC Barcelona in the quarter-finals, after the sides shared a win apiece in their group stage meetings.

Real surely did not want this draw. The Madrid neighbors have already met six times this season and Real have not won any, losing four and drawing two. "They were better than us in everything," admitted Carlo Ancelotti after their most recent duel, [a 4-0 bonanza for Atlético in February](#). The way Antoine Griezmann and Mario Mandzukic, in particular, tore into Real in that game suggested Atlético are understandably confident that they have Real's number, and the way some of Real's player seemed to give up towards the end of that match suggested they might agree.

[Bayern Munich](#) have lost only once in 22 matches to Portuguese Porto opponents – that was in the 1987 European Cup final, when Rabah Madjer scored the winning goal for Porto with a delicious backheel. Bayern will have to be wary of another Algerian this time, as winger Yacine Brahimi has been in terrific form as Porto have swept into the quarter-finals without losing a match, the only team to have achieved that feat this season.

This will be a very different tie to the one that Juventus enjoyed in the last round, when they allowed Borussia Dortmund to attack them [before demolishing them on the counter](#). Monaco will be having none of that. So Carlos Tevez and Álvaro Morata will not be able to romp free behind a high defensive line.

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