

Sports News Roundup July 20



Toronto 2015

The Cuban delegation is placed today at the 5th seat of the medal table of the *17th Pan-American Games Toronto 2015* underway in Canada, showing 23 gold, 18 silver and 26 bronze medals.

The great continental lid is commanded by the US sportive embassy with (59-53-48), followed by Canada (54-48-40), Brazil (30-28-41) and Colombia (24-8-22); but let's see what has happened so far:

Taekwondo

The taekwondoka Yania Aguirre dressed up in gold on Sunday at the 1st day of taekwondo tournament in *Toronto 2015*.

In a dramatic finish, and in the very closing seconds of the final bout in the 49 kilograms division, the Cuban athlete overcame an almost decisive disadvantage to win by a narrow margin of 10-9 Itzel Manjarrez from Mexico.

Now, Cuba will seek today Monday its 2nd medal in taekwondo in the women's 57 kilos category through Yamicel Núñez, one of its leading figures, world bronze in 2013 and 2014 Veracruz runner-up.

Sport Shooting

Cuban shooter Eglys de la Cruz won the gold in the 50 meters rifle modality with 451.7 points, a record for a Pan-American lid.

This was the 20th gold medal for Cuba in this event and the 3rd time that the veteran Eglys wins the continental title, whose track record includes an Olympic bronze in Beijing 2008.

The Cuban athlete, famous for her equanimity and very non-expressive face, tied in the qualification round of the Pan-American mark of 584 points, established in Havana-1991 by the American Debra Sinclair.

Completed the podium Argentinean Amelia Fournel (446.1) and the Puerto Rican Yarimar Market (435.2).

Baseball

Back-to-back 9th inning home runs off the bats of Yorbis Borroto and Jose Garcia lifted Cuba to a 7-6 walk-off win over Puerto Rico in the bronze medal contest on Sunday; thus, the Pan-American Games men's baseball bronze medal went back to Cuba again like 4 years ago.

Puerto Rico led 6-3 going into the 9th but Raul Rivera couldn't nail down the save, giving up 2 singles followed by the 2 Cuban homers.

Cuban reliever Yennier Cano was credited with the win after throwing 2 innings of shutout baseball. This was the 15th medal that Cuba has won at the Pan-Am Games.

And another form baseball but this time in the Asian leagues says that Cuba did start the *World Port Tournament* very well and defeated Chinese Taipei.

In the evening match on Sunday, July 19th, Cubans took the lead in the 1st inning on a 2-0 while scoring another in the 2nd and 3rd chapters. Despite the good play on the part of Chinese Taipei, they only managed to score 1 run in both the 6th and 8th. The team led by Victor Mesa did not allow anymore runs.

Triple Jump

Triple jumper Pedro Pablo Pichardo arrived in Toronto on Saturday, July 18th with an optimistic message for the Cuban delegation – he is looking to win, and with a strong performance to boot.

Pichardo confirmed as much minutes after arriving from Europe, where he has had a great Season and is on the top of the Diamond League triple jump ranking and attracting a lot of media attention.

"I come with the expectation of winning with a good result, but I do not want to speak about particulars," said the world champion, considered the favorite to clinch the gold.

The star considers the fact that many triple jump records have been set at the Pan-American Games to be a motivator. These records include the performances of Cuban triple jumper Pedro Perez Dueña (17.40 metres in Cali 1971) and Brazilian Joao Carlos de Oliveira (17.89 metres in México 1975).

"These achievements help you to push yourself more and more in training and competition, and provide the inspiration to prepare well," said the 22-year old.

Referring to his performances since January, which he finds are satisfactory, Pichardo took the opportunity to explain how events this year have added momentum to his career as a triple-jumper.

"My teacher and I have decided to focus on the speed of my initial sprint to the take off board, as I have been uncoordinated sometimes even with jumps over 15 meters. But this is of small concern – it is all part of the preparation to arrive at the World Championships in good shape," he said.

"The idea is to gain centimeters and to coordinate the jumps better," Pichardo added. He has already twice surpassed 18 meters -18.06 in Doha on May 15th and 18.08 28 in July in Havana.

Pichardo also spoke about his close rivalry with the U.S. London 2012 Olympics star Christian Taylor. He has already outperformed the U.S. triple jumper twice this season.

"I thank the people who follow my career, especially Cubans, to whom I can only say my best is yet to come," he said. He acknowledged that he does not yet know all of his rivals at the Pan-Am games in Toronto but praised his triple jumping compatriot Ernesto Revé.

Wrestling

Cuban Reineris Salas won the gold medal in men's freestyle wrestling (86 kilos) at the *Mississauga Sports Center* by defeating on the weekend American Jake Herbert 12-7.

With his win the 2-time world champion has brought Cuba its 4th wrestling gold medal of these regional event.

On the same day, Cuban wrestlers Liván López (74 kilos) and Andrés Ramos (125 kilos) won bronze medals by defeating Canada's Jevon Balfour and Nicaragua's René Silva, respectively.

Rhythmic Gymnastics

Some medal victories are worth more than their color, and are a joyous occasion for what they represent and the context in which they are achieved.

This is what happened on Saturday night, July 18th when a bronze medal was won in the all round competition by the Cuban rhythmic gymnastics team at the *Toronto Coliseum*; Cuba thus maintained its position in this event from the previous games.

"For us this was a gold. We are happy and now we will aim higher in the apparatus finals," said coach Nely Ochoa, who has experienced firsthand the sacrifices made by the team in the last 4 years.

"We had forecast coming in 4th because the team had just competed and we knew that some of the gymnasts were new and were competing for the first time at this level," said the coach. Ochoa also praised the team's performance at the ribbons event.

Cuba, with half of its rhythmic gymnastics team new since the previous games, earned 13,492 and 12,200 points in each program for a total of 25,692. This earned 3rd place after Brazil and the United States.

Beach Volleyball

The duo of Lianma Flores and Leila Martinez defeated in a hard-fought clash Canadians Melissa Humaña-Paredes and Taylor Pischke and will go for the gold today.



Radio Habana Cuba