

# *Sports News Roundup November 03*

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## **Baseball**

Baseball can help in the relations between the US and Cuba, said Ben Rhodes, *Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications in Barack Obama's administration*.

Quoted by *The New York Times*, the senior official said there is much support for that sport be part of the opening between the US and Cuba, although the persistence of the economic, financial and commercial blockade is a serious obstacle to be eliminated by the US Congress.

Baseball is a revered institution in both countries, and to the extent that the bonds between the two peoples and deepened rebuilding bridges grow, Major League Baseball has a key role.

According to the *Times*, the Obama administration and the MLB work to create a completely new system to facilitate exchanges and contracts for Cuban players who would not be obliged to leave their country, the Cuban agency *Prensa Latina* highlights.

In that sense, the paper said contacts in New York between a Major League attorney, Dan Halem, and Cuban officials to express interest in reforming the existing regulations in the sport.

He added that several American executives also traveled to Cuba last October to examine the fields and other facilities and determine if MLB players can play in Cuba next Spring.

The New York daily noted that baseball and the Obama administration will have to overcome a maze of rules and procedures, which would be finally paved if Congress removes the blockade laws.

In recent weeks, the *Times* said, MLB, supported by the White House, requested a license to do business with Cuba through the *Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury*, an agency responsible for enforcing sanctions imposed by the U.S. blockade against Cuba for over half a century.

And more news from baseball says that in preparation for the upcoming *International Baseball Tournament*, in Seoul, South Korea Cuba will play in 2 exhibition games. In what has been titled "Seoul Super Series," South Korea will face Cuba on Wednesday and Thursday, with both games at *Gocheok Sky Dome* in western Seoul.

It will be the first meeting between the countries since the gold medal game of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when South Korea prevailed 3-2, with reliever Chong Tae-hyon getting Yulieski Gourriel ground into a game-ending double play, and both figures are back on their respective teams this week getting ready for the inaugural *Premier 12*, which will kick off on Sunday in Sapporo, Japan.

South Korea is paired with Japan, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Venezuela and the United States in *Group B* while Cuba has drawn Canada, Chinese Taipei, Italy, the Netherlands and Puerto Rico in *Group A*. After playing Cuba, South Korea will depart for Japan on Friday.

### **Gymnastics**

The 4 Cubans who participated in the *World Gymnastics Championship* in Glasgow, Scotland, are already at home, led by Manrique Larduet, double medalist and winner of the ticket to *Rio de Janeiro 2016*.

At the José Martí International airport, the small delegation was received by officials of the Cuban Institute of Sports, headed by its Vice-President Antonio López Cubilla, and former gymnast Erick Lopez, also a world medalist and Pan-American multi champion.

### **Chess**

The Cuban GM Lázaro Bruzón split the point on Monday with his Spanish counterpart Salvador del Rio and saw reduced his leadership at the 1st place of the *Ibero-American Chess Championship*, held in Bilbao, Spain.

Bruzón, owner of 2657 Elo points, led white pieces in the 8th and penultimate round against the local Salvador del Rio, Elo 2512, and reached 7 units to be ratified in the 1st place in the tournament, in the absence of the 9th and final round to be played on this date.

In 2nd place with 6.5 stripes stands alone Argentine GM Alan Pichot, who beat his pair of Andorra, Oscar De La Riva, who are followed by 7 players with 6 units, among them GMs Julio Granda, of Peru, Axel Bachman, of Paraguay, and Cuba Lelys Martinez, who owns the 8th position by tie up.

In the last round are scheduled for Tuesday, Bruzón and Argentine Pichot will star the most important game because it will define the title of the event, where the Cuban ensures the crown with a draw while the South American is required to overcome to finish pointer, while the rest of the chess players have no chance to take 1st place.

Bruzón, placed 91st in world rankings, is unbeaten with 6 wins and 2 draws, while the Argentine Alan Pichot, only 17 years-old and 8th in the ranking of his country with 2502 Elo points, accumulates record in the Ibero-American event with 5 wins and 3 tables.

## Judo

As a fair recognition to the Cuban judo Rafael Manso considered his election in the post of *Director of Development* in the new executive of the *Pan-American Judo Confederation (CPJ)*, recently taken in its extraordinary congress in Miami, United States.

The national commissioner told local JIT sports daily it was a fair decision with the country that has internationally achieved the most in this discipline for America, and it is also a commitment to maintain the progress of the current programs of the *World Judo Federation (IJF)* by its English acronym).

Although he could not be present for not receiving his visa, Manso welcomed the presence of Cuba in this entity and reiterated his thanks to the IJF, especially to its holder Marius Vizer, by supporting the Cuban judo.

Last Saturday was held the electoral process and the adoption of new CPJ regulations attended by delegates from 22 countries at the *Milton Miami Airport hotel*, who unanimously elected Mexican Manuel Larrañaga as the new president, and as executives Canadian Michael Tamura (Vice President), Uruguayan Ignacio Aloise (Secretary General), Chile's Aquiles Gómez (Treasurer), Puerto Rican Porfirio Garcia (Director of Education) and the Bolivian Juan José Paz (Solidarity Dpt.)

These brand-new executives appointed in their first meeting Peruvian Carlos Zagarra as sporting director, Cuban Uvelino Moreno as doctor, Argentinean Ovidio Garnero as arbitration judge, Mexican Liliana Estrada in front of the Ethics Dpt., and American José Humberto Rodríguez as administrator.

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