

Sports News Roundup June 26



Baseball

The Cuban Baseball Federation (CBF) has pre-selected 44 players to form the lineup that will play an annual five-game series against a U.S. university team from July 23-27 in two provinces of western Cuba.

The shortlist is made up of four catchers, 16 infielders, 8 outfielders and 16 pitchers, according to Cuban sports news website Jit.

The chosen players, aged 24 on average, were to gather on Wednesday at the *Victoria de Giron Stadium* in the city of Matanzas, 190 km. east of Havana.

Many young players who had outstanding results last season are included on the list, including 1st baseman Yasiel Santoya, shortstop Lourdes Y. Gourriel and outfielder Roel Santos, as well as more experienced players, such as catcher Frank Camilo Morejon and 3rd baseman Michel Enriquez.

Alfonso Urquiola, coach of the Pinar del Rio team that won Cuba's national championship last season, was named coach.

The first 2 games of the match will be held at *Victoria de Giron* on July 23rd and 24th. Subsequent U.S.-Cuba games will be held at *Capitan San Luis Stadium* in the western province of Pinar del Rio from July 25th to 27th.

This will mark only the 3rd time Cuban and U.S. baseball teams face off since resuming Collegiate National Team competitions in 2012, after they were discontinued in 1986. So far the U.S. has 7 wins.

Cuba won 3-2 at home in 2012, but the following year lost 5-0 during the tour covering the cities of Des Moines (Iowa), Omaha (Nebraska), and Cary and Durham (North Carolina).

It is likely that the U.S. team will be very similar to the one that won all 5 games held in 2013.

According to CBF President Higinio Velez, "it is a selection of the best college players in the country -- young but with many games played."

And regarding the passion of most Cubans, it was officially released that 6 more baseball players have been ruled out of the current national squad for trying to defect, Cuban authorities said on Wednesday.

Cubadebate, government news website, listed the players as Villa Clara pitchers Diosdani Castillo and Yasmani Hernandez Romero; infielders Gelkis Jimenez and Adriel Labrada; pitcher Carlos Manuel Portuondo of Santiago, and Isle of Youth outfielder Alejandro Jaime Ortiz.

Cubadebate said they were implicated in "attempts to leave the country illegally;" however, it did not give details or say whether any were successful. The Cuban website also named Yasmani Tomas, a hard-hitting outfielder formerly with Havana ball club of *Industriales* whose departure was acknowledged by officials on Friday.

School Games

Villa Clara will become the largest venue of the upcoming 50th edition of the *National School Games*, to host from July 3rd to over 1200 athletes in 5 disciplines, said Omar Torres, methodologist of school sports in the territory.

He said in a press conference held today that all facilities are ready to welcome the participants, including some foreign delegations such as the Venezuelan fencing team with 24 members.

The *Eduardo Garcia Sports Room*, the *Héctor Ruiz Pérez School of Sports Initiation (EIDE)* and the *Los Alacranes Aquatic Complex*, at the municipality of Sagua la Grande, will host young athletes.

Boxing

Camagüey defeated 3-2 to Guantánamo, which did the same to Pinar del Rio, during the 2nd day of the final of the *National Series of Boxing* that concludes tomorrow at the Sports City in the Cuban capital.

The young 18-year old figure, Reinier Calderón, excelled by beating 2-1 to experienced Irán Pérez. Also excelled the pen Norland Yera, the light welterweight and double world runner-up Yasnier Toledo, the medium Arlen López, the middleweight Frank Sanchez, the super complete Reinier Castillo, the lightweight and world champion Lázaro Alvarez, the always fiery welterweight Yordan Frómeta, the flyweight Yordan Soyot and heavyweight Irosvani Duverger.

Now, Pinar del Rio has 67 points, Guantanamo 53 and Camagüey 40. Tomorrow will be tops in the 49, 56, 64, 75, 91 kg divisions and the next day at 52, 60, 69, 81, +91 kg.



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