

Sports News Roundup Jan. 30



Pinar del Río Baseball Team Is Ready for Caribbean Series

The team of Pinar del Río that will represent Cuba at the upcoming Caribbean Baseball Series will leave tomorrow for the Puerto Rican capital city of San Juan, host of the Caribbean classic from February 2nd to the 8th.

Coached by Alfonso Urquiola, the squad of 28 players have been training at Pinar del Río's Capitan San Luis stadium, where they received the national flag in honor of the 162nd anniversary of the birth of Cuba's National Hero José Martí.

Made up by three catchers, nine infielders, seven outfielders and nine pitchers, the Pinar del Río Vegueros will be the trump card of Cuba in its second consecutive appearance in the Caribbean Series, again as a guest country.

In the qualifying phase, from February 2nd to the 5th, the Cuban side will debut against the baseball team of Mexico, the next day they will rival the Dominican Republic to then face the hosts, finishing in a game against Venezuela.

The first four teams will play semifinals on Saturday, February 7th and the winners of those games will fight for the gold medal on Sunday 8th to be held, like all the matches, at Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Cuba ranked last on its return to the Caribbean Baseball Series, after half a century of absence, with one win and three defeats in the event held early last year on Margarita Island, Venezuela, where the winning team was Mexico's Hermosillo Naranjeros.

Cuba now has permission from the United States Department of State to participate in the Caribbean Series. "Everything about Cuba is resolved. The only thing that remains is the subject of some visas, but the issue with OFAC is resolved," said Puello Herrera, the president of the Caribbean Baseball Confederation, who referred to OFAC, the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Puello also confirmed that the process of organizing the event which brings together league champions in Venezuela, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba is very advanced.

"In Puerto Rico everything is ready for this regional party and we all are just waiting to officially announce all countries' rosters and the whole event's schedule," Puello Herrera said.

Cuban Judo to Meet Challenging Events in 2015

Cuban judokas will open their international calendar of 2015 in Europe with tournaments in Belgium, home of the Opens of Vise for men, and Arlon for women. Germany will host the Dusseldorf Grand Prix for both sexes.

As expected, José Armenteros , 100kg world runner up champ in Russia 2014, Magdiel Estrada (73 kilos) and Ivan Silva (81), will travel to Europe, coached by Professor Justo Noda, and supported by Dr. Ubelino Moreno.

The coach Ismael Bourbon and Doctor Edel Robaina traveled accompanied by women athletes Onix Cortés (70kg), bronze medalist in 2014, Dayaris Mestre (48), Aliuska Ojeda (57) Maylín del Toro (63) and Kaliema Antomarchi (78).

The Belgian tournaments will take place on January 31st and February 1st, while that of Germany will be from February 20th to the 22nd, so training bases are planned in France before and between competitions.

These events are part of the preparation for the Pan American Games in Toronto, Canada, scheduled from July 10 to the 26th and the World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, from August 24th to the 30th, the main commitments of the year.

Other scheduled contests are the Pan American Championships in Edmonton, Canada (April), qualifier for the Canadian continental multi-sport event, and the ALBA Games in Ecuador (also in April).

The women's national team, coached by Ronaldo Veitia, will also participate –as guest- in the New York teams tournament, in United States (March) with Dayaris Mestre (48), Yanet Bermoy (52), Aliuska Ojeda (57), Olga Masferrer (63) and Yalennis Castillo (78).

More good news for Cuba's judo team is the participation of coaches Armando Padron (w) and Julio Alderete (m), and referee William Rosquet in a course given by the International Judo Federation, in Malaga, Spain, on January 30 and 31, with a view to updating new rules.

It is also expected that five judokas will compete in the Women's Festival in the Dominican Republic, from March 13th to the 15th. The national championships will also take place in March, for both men and women, here in Havana.



Radio Habana Cuba