

Sport News Roundup February

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Baseball

Granma beat Matanzas by a score of 13-3 to meet with its victim on top of the *54th Cuban Baseball Championship*, both with 43 wins and 26 defeats.

Lázaro Blanco was ratified in front of the most successful pitchers of the Season to score his 12th win in an excellent opening of 5 innings during which he just allowed 1 hit to Matanzas' *Los Cocodrilos*, while Ramón Licor was charged with the failure.

Los Alazanes deployed an overwhelming offensive of 17 hits, including 2 homers of outfielder Alfredo Despaigne and the designated batter Urmani Guerra, authors of 2 RBIs per capita, while shortstop Marcos Fonseca hit 4-3 and drove in three.

Meanwhile, Industriales returned to winning ways by beating Artemisa 9-1 to escape from the sweep in their particular subset and retain 3rd place, 4 sets from leaders Matanzas and Granma.

Rudy Reyes hit 4-3 with 1 home run and 5 RBIs to lead the winning drive, seconded by shortstop Jorge Enrique Alomá's 1 solo

homer, while rookie Raidel Orta won success by spreading 5 hits in 6 innings.

In the other Monday night challenge, Ciego de Ávila settled the battered Holguin 11-3 with 3 trailers per capita of Ariel Borrero and Orlando Lavandera, while reliever Yunier Cano scored his 9th victory.

Thus, the Avilanians' *Los Tigres* tied for 4th seat with Isla de la Juventud that in evening hours succumbed to the current monarch Pinar del Río by 12-6, with credit from the mound to Yaifredo Domínguez.

William Saavedra hit 4-3 with 2 doubles and 4 trailers to lead the winning drive, seconded by outfielder Yordanis Linares (5-2), author of 1 homer and 3 RBIs.

Now, behind Matanzas and Granma with 46-23 go Industriales with 39-30, followed by Ciego de Ávila and Isla de la Juventud (38-31), Pinar del Río (37-32), Artemisa (35-34) and Holguin (31-38).

And another good baseball story says the young Cuban player Yoan Moncada received the greater bonus of an international amateur player to sign for the *Boston Red Sox* of *Major League Baseball America*, said today the site www.mlb.com.

According to the article, Moncada, 19 years old, will exceed 8.27 million bonus received by right-handed ballplayer Yoan López of the *Diamondbacks* in January, since Moncada has been one of the most desired pre-season players where he gets to play with 10 teams in 6 weeks before being hired by the *Boston Red Sox*.

As yet he is not 23 years old and did not play in Cuba's professional league at least 5 years, Moncada should be subjected to the rules of international transfers of MLB, according to which each team has \$700,000 US dollars plus a bonus that depends on the results of the previous Season.

The regulation stipulates that clubs are penalized in the next transfer period (2015-2016) if they exceed the bonus. The *Boston Red Sox* already had passed it and thus receives the maximum punishment, which includes the payment of 100% in taxes from the excess amount and cannot hire another international player for more than \$300,000 US dollars over the next 2 periods of transfers.

According to the article, the total cost of this operation for the *Boston Red Sox* is 60 million US dollars, including bonuses, penalties and the contract of the Cuban player.

Moncada, who can play 2nd and 3rd base, or shortstop, debuted with the *Cienfuegos* team of the *National Cuban Series* at age 17 and unlike many of his countrymen, did not leave Cuba or seek residence in another country but his own team released him. The Cuban government gave him a visa and a passport and he officially left by plane to a Central American country, where he trained and attracted the attention of talent scouts of the Majors. On February 3rd, and according to the MLB website, Moncada became a free agent, allowing him to sign for the Majors.

The MLB already announced this month that it will no longer require the permission of the *Department of Treasury of the United States* to sign a Cuban player; thus, Moncada will be the first Cuban baseball player to sign under the new MLB guidelines.

This Cuban ballplayer is the ultimate promise in reaching the United States, where Cuban players are beating wage records; for instance, in December last year, Yasmany Thomas signed a 6 year contract with the *Arizona Diamondbacks* for \$ 68.5 million US dollars.

However, Yasmany Thomas did not exceed the record for most amount of money in a signed first contract, which is in possession of his compatriot Rusney Castillo, who in August 2014 joined the *Boston Red Sox* for \$ 72.5 million US dollars.

Now, Rusney Castillo joins the *Boston Red Sox* with Moncada, which will increase the number of 25 Cuban players who played in the Majors last season.

Judo

The judoka Aliuska Ojeda, 57 kilograms, is the only representative of Cuba on the first day of the *Dusseldorf Grand Prix*, in Germany, an event that grants points for the world ranking.

According to the website of the tournament, Ojeda, bronze medalist of *Havana 2014 Grand Prix*, was bye in the opening round and will face in the 2nd to the winner of the bout between Austrian Tina Zeltner and Turkish Nazlican Ozerler.

This Friday there will be activity in women's divisions of 48 and 52 kilos and men's 60 and 66, but without the presence of Cubans.

But Magdiel Estrada (73), silver medalist in *Havana 2014 Grand Prix*, Iván Silva (81), bronze medalist at the *2014 Pan-American Championships* in Guayaquil, and Maylin del Toro (63) will see action on Saturday representing the Caribbean nation.

Meanwhile, José Armenteros (100), *Chelyabinsk 2014 World Championship* runner-up and Kaliema Antomachín (78), 5th in the world cup of *Rio de Janeiro 2013* will fight on Sunday --last date of the German event--, which brings together 547 judokas, 347 men and 220 women from 75 countries.

Chess

The Cuban GM Leinier Dominguez closed the 8th round of *Chess Grand Prix* held in Tbilisi installed in 5th place in the Table, headed by the Russian GM Evgeny Tomashevsky.

Leinier, leader of Latin-America's ladder with 2726 Elo, signed tables with Russian GM Dmitry Jakovenko (2733) after 34 moves of a *Spanish Opening* using white pieces.

Now Leinier shows 4 units and goes up to half of the Table with 2 units less than those exhibited by the leader Tomashevsky (2716).

This Tuesday will be a day off to resume hostilities on Wednesday facing Dominguez vs. Russia's Alexander Grischuk.

FIFA Proposes World Cup Qatar 2022 in November-December

The work group of the *FIFA International Soccer Federation* given the task of looking for alternative dates for the *Qatar 2022 World Cup* proposed today to carry out the tournament in the months of November and December.

The only effective option was November-December, explained FIFA in a press release, in which they assured the proposal was supported by the six continental Confederations of the sport.

However, the dates have to be ratified by the Executive Committee of the entity on March 19th-20th and this would force at least for that season, the calendar of the main European Leagues and the Champion League.

The work group came to this conclusion, after a period of consultations over the last 6 months, after which it was also agreed to reduce the days of competition.

At the beginning, the tournament had to be disputed in the months of June and July, but due to the high temperatures registered in Persian Gulf countries during the boreal summer, it was decided to change the dates.

The work group chaired by Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, member of the *FIFA Executive Committee* and President of the *Asian Confederation*, presented three alternative proposals: January-February, April-May and November-December, all in 2022.

The coincidence with the *Olympic Winter Games of 2022* discarded the first date, the Ramadan, starting on April 2nd, prevented from electing that month and the option of May was not chosen due to similar weather conditions as June and July.

The analysis had as its objective to find the most viable solution for sponsors, having in mind the possible impact of conditions on players, the technical corp and aficionados, as well as collateral effects for the Leagues, said the FIFA.

Also, specialists proposed that the Cup Confederations 2021 is not held in Qatar, but at another venue, traditionally held in December.

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