

# *Sports News Roundup March 09*

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## **Baseball**

The current champion Pinar del Río remained at 3 games from the *Qualifying Zone* of Cuban baseball playoffs, despite overcoming the leader Matanzas 4-1 while Ciego de Avila defeated Artemisa to climb to 2nd place in the competition.

Reliever Liván Moinelo was victorious by allowing just 1 hit in 5 innings with 4 strikeouts, supported by the catcher Olber Peña's batting role, author of 1 solo homer.

Alfonso Urquiola's disciples joined their victory 41 with 38 defeats, still lagging behind from its two rivals, Industriales 44-35 and Isla de la Juventud (42-37), which also won their respective commitments.

Industriales took hold in 4th place by beating 8-2 to Holguin, with the 7th Frank Monthiet's victory and Rudy Reyes' offensive highlight with 1 homer and 2 RBIs.

Meanwhile, Isla de la Juventud broke the string of 6 consecutive defeats and beat Granma 16-8.

Ciego de Avila took the failure of Granma to climb to 2nd place after leaving Artemisa on the field by 5-4 thanks to decisive José Adonis Garcia's homer of 3 runs in the 9th inning against the defeated closer José Ángel García.

Nevertheless, Matanzas, only team guaranteed to the post season, continues to lead the *54th Cuban Baseball Championship* with 51 and 28, followed by Ciego de Avila and Granma (47-32), teams virtually secured to the next phase.

However, Industriales (44-35), Isla de la Juventud (42-37) and Pinar del Río (41-38) vying for the 4th and last berth, while Artemisa (37-42) and Holguín (35-44) are but struggling not to own the basement.

## Table Tennis

Cuba said goodbye to the *International Open Table Tennis Tournament* in Yucatán, México, to get 3 silver medals through Liván Martínez and Yohán Mora.

With 2 of the 3 subtitles achieved, Martínez was the most outstanding by Cuban squad that completed the experienced Lisi Castillo.

The promising player from Havana, Liván Martínez, gave in the crown of the U-21 category facing Chilean Gustavo Gómez, while the local Ricardo Villa took bronze.

Thus, Cuban Leonel Pomares' pupils ended their participation in the event, which served as hard-training fought for 3 of the best national figures, whose main objective is focused on the *Pan-Am Toronto*, Canada, next July.

## Women's Baseball

Cuba scored 3 runs in the bottom of the 6th inning to beat Puerto Rico by a score of 5-3 during the 2nd qualifying day of the Women's *Baseball Tournament* based at the *Cibao Stadium* in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

With the 3-2 in favor of Puerto Rico in the 6th entry, Yurismaris' unstoppable leveled the score, which was followed by the Puerto Ricans defensive error that allowed the other 2 runs.

Now, Cuba shares with the top with the Americans with 2 wins and no defeats, then followed by Venezuela with 1 smile and 1 defeat, and closes Puerto Rico and the host, Dominicans, with 0-2; in the next presentation, Cuba rival the States.

## Soccer

Cuba's soccer team will play a friendly match against the US club, *New York Cosmos*, next June 2nd, confirmed today the vice-president of the Cuban Soccer Association, Antonio Garcés.

*The New York Cosmos*, which has had famous players such as the Spanish Raúl González Blanco, will be the first US professional team that will play on the island in the last 16 years.

This match will be held at the *Havana's Pedro Marrero Stadium*, which locals will use it as preparation for the Gold Cup, the main event of the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), to be held in July, Garcés stressed.

Before playing against the *Cosmos*, the Cuban players will travel to the Dominican Republic to go against that local team on March 25th, to finally face Jamaica's team at Montego Bay 4 days later.

The visit of the US team will attract important soccer personalities such as Raul Gonzalez, former captain of *Real Madrid* and the Spanish national team, along with Brazilian-Spanish Marcos Senna, former member of *Villareal* and the *Spanish* squad.

Raul is the 2nd top scorer in the history of the Spanish team, with 44 goals, and the first of *Madrid*, with 323 goals.

The last visit of a US professional team to Cuba was in 1999, when the *Baltimore Orioles* and the Cuban baseball team played a friendly cap.

*The New York Cosmos* is the team in which the Brazilian star Edson Arantes Do Nascimento, well-known as *Pelé*, ended his career in 1977, and that also featured stars such as the Paraguayans Julio César Romero and Roberto Cabanas, and the German Franz Beckenbauer.

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