

# *Sports News Roundup June 03*

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## **Cosmos TD Describes Game with Cuba as Unforgettable**

The coach of the *New York Cosmos* soccer team, Venezuelan Giovanni Savarese, described as an unforgettable experience his visit to Cuba and the friendly game with the national Cuban soccer selection.

It is undoubtedly an extraordinary experience, beyond what we had imagined, said Mr. Savarese during a press conference held after the game on Tuesday that made the headlines in sports news worldwide.

The *Cosmos* won 4 to 1 over the Cuban selection in a friendly game held at the *Pedro Marrero Stadium* in Havana, featuring Spanish forward Raul Gonzalez, a former player of *Real Madrid*.

The game was considered historic by the major sports figures, according to Brazilian Edson Arantes do Nascimento, Pele, *President of Honor* of the *Cosmos*, who watched from the stands. After the game, the TD from Venezuela thanked the Cuban Federation for the invitation and the people of Cuba for their warm welcome.

The boys feel all very honored to live this historic moment, said Savarese and added he brought his best team to help the Cuban selection prepare for the upcoming Gold Cup.

We would be happy to return here with the *Cosmos*, the trainer said, adding that it was a possibility that a Cuban team would visit New York.

Asked about the results of the game, Savarese affirmed they never thought of inflicting a heavy defeat and are always very respectful to their rivals, but his team has a winning mentality and it always goes for victory.

The TD elaborated the result of the game does not reflect what was seen on the field, as the Cuban 11 had several opportunities of scoring they did not take. For his part, the Cuban TD, Raul Gonzalez Triana, said his pupils played very poorly in the first half, but improved a lot in the 2nd.

It is always useful to play these games because they help us a lot, he said. The *Cosmos* is the first professional soccer team of the United States that played in Cuba since 1978, when the Chicago Sting visited the local selection.

Founded in 1970 and inscribed in the NASL, the *Cosmos* made history from 1975 to 1984, when it invested high sums of money to hire world stars in the last years of their professional careers, among them Pele, 3-time winner of World Cups, German Franz Beckenbauer, and Dutch Johan Neeskens.

The last time a professional U.S. team visited Cuba was on March 28th, 1999, when the Baltimore Orioles played against the national baseball selection.

The Cuban soccer selection prepares now to play at the Gold Cup, in the U.S. from July 7th to 26th. The Cubans are in *Group C*, also formed by the teams of Mexico, Guatemala and Trinidad and Tobago.

## **Athletics**

Athletics will try to become the standard of the Cuban delegation to attend *Toronto-2015 XVII Pan-American Games* next July, the National Commissioner of that discipline, Jorge Luis Sánchez told local media.

The purpose of our athletes will be to achieve the best performance and reap the most medals among all sports participants to help keep the 2nd place in the global ranking per country, said the official.

And in another news from Athletics, we learned that the 4th stop of the *Diamond League of Athletics* to be held in Rome, Italy, beginning tomorrow, with the presence of Cuban stars such as triple jumper Pedro Pablo Pichardo, one of the great attractions of the event.

## **Toronto-2015**

The Royal Mint of Canada issued a magnificent collection of numismatic coins to celebrate the Toronto-2015 Pan-American Games.

As the medals to be awarded in this regional fair and in the Para-Pan American Games, the coins celebrate the diversity that the Games will bring to Canada this summer.

## **Russian Preps for World Cup-2018 Advance Despite FIFA Crisis**

Russian officials said today that Russia will continue preparing to host the *World Cup-2018*, despite the corruption crisis that shakes the *International Football Federation (FIFA)* and led to the resignation of its President Joseph Blatter.

Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for the government, declared to feel surprised by Blatter's decision, announced on Tuesday, but assured that the relationship with the governing body of soccer in the world is

kept.

We do not know what was the reason for his resignation... the cooperation with FIFA is maintained and, most importantly, Russia continues with the preparations for the World Cup, he added.

For his part, Alexander Zhukov, head of the *Russian Olympic Committee*, dismisses the possibility of a boycott of the *World Cup of 2018*, regarding a claim from the management of soccer in England.

Greg Dyke, president of the Soccer Association, said he would support any boycott led by the *Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)*, after Blatter's reelection.

'We have heard statements, including from politicians (...) but the sports community never will', he said. Blatter announced his resignation four days after being re-elected as FIFA president, amid elections marked by a criminal investigation on the voting to define the seat of the World Cups of 2018 and 2022.

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