

Sports News Roundup October 01



Baseball

Former baseball player Victor Mesa was appointed on Wednesday as the Cuban manager for the upcoming "*Premier 12*" Tournament to take place from November 8th-21st in Taiwan and Japan, confirmed Heriberto Suarez, national commissioner of the discipline.

Mesa is currently managing Matanzas team in the *55th National Baseball Series*, and will lead the Cuban team again as he did in the *3rd World Baseball Classic* in 2013, and the *Central-American Games Veracruz 2014* and led a Cuban team that played and won the trophy in the *Rotterdam Baseball Tournament* held in the Netherlands.

Twelve teams will compete in this 1st edition of the *Premier 12* divided into 2 pools, in which Cuba leads *Pool A* along with Canada, Puerto Rico, the Netherlands, Italy, and the hosting team Taiwan.

And another good one about baseball says that undergraduate students studying sports journalism at *Penn State* will make 2 separate international trips in the coming months, covering sports and more in Cuba and Brazil.

The trips --following the Penn State baseball team during a one-of-a-kind trip to Cuba in November and covering the *Paralympic Games* in Rio de Janeiro in September 2016-- display a commitment by the *John Curley Center for Sports Journalism*, housed in the College of Communications, to complement its core courses and consistent on-campus programming with special working opportunities for students.

“The Curley Center is giving its students real-time, professional experiences while covering events of cultural significance,” said John Affleck, the Knight Chair in Sports Journalism and Society and director of the Curley Center. “The trip to Havana could not come at a more important moment for U.S.-Cuba relations and we are excited that we’ll be there to tell the story for everyone back in Pennsylvania.”

In the past, Penn State students have covered the *Croke Park Classic*, *Super Bowl*, *Final Four* and *Olympics* as part of similar endeavors.

Eight students will travel to Cuba in November, following the Penn State baseball team and providing content for media news across the state as part of a partnership with the *Pennsylvania News Media Association*. The Curley Center utilized a similar approach following the Penn State football team to Ireland for the Croke Park Classic in 2014; while more than 20 media organizations used the content that students produced.

While the model will be similar, Affleck knows that the Cuba trip poses a different set of challenges. “Americans did not see much of Cuba in the 50-plus years our nations had no formal diplomatic relations,” he said. “Sports is a great window on culture and we hope to give readers and viewers a better sense of what Cuba and Cubans are like through that lens of sports.”

Students have been preparing for the trip to Cuba for weeks without knowing until recently whether the trip would get approval from the Cuban government. It is the 2nd trip featuring students from the College of Communications in the past 3 years to Cuba, when a separate group in an international reporting class traveled to Havana in 2014.

After this 2nd international trip, a group of Curley Center's students will travel to Brazil to cover the *Paralympic Games* in Rio de Janeiro.

That class will be a partnership between the *Curley Center* and *The Associated Press*. Again, students will gain valuable, real-world experience while covering a major event. Like other such trips, the mix of cultural and professional challenges exemplifies the goal of the Curley Center in preparing student sports journalists through unrivaled and thought-provoking opportunities.

“We want students to get experiences here that are not possible anywhere else,” said Affleck, who started planning a trip to the Paralympic Games nearly a year ago. “And we are lucky enough to have quality students who can undertake such endeavors, grow personally and, at the same time, help news organizations by providing meaningful content.”

During all the trips, Curley Center students focus on storytelling through broadcast, multimedia and print journalism options.

An application process for Curley Center students interested in the trip to Rio for the *Paralympic Games* will start with the Spring semester.

Volleyball

Cuba's women team lost 4-1 sets to Puerto Rico in the quarter-final stage of the *2015 Women's NORCECA Continental Championship, Volleyball Final Four Olympic Qualifier*, held at *Bicentenario Auditorium of Morelia city*, Mexico.

According to the website, the Puerto Ricans won in 1 hour and 45 min. dominating all game statistics, where Karina Ocasio was the top scorer with 21 goals, supported by Aurea Cruz (15) and Stephanie Enright (12), while Sulian Matienzo (18), Regla Gracia (11) and Heidy Rodriguez (11) stood out for Cuba.

Now, Roberto Garcia's disciples will rival Trinidad and Tobago this Thursday, looking for a place from the 5th-8th positions, while the Puerto Ricans will stumble upon the States in the semifinals.

Meanwhile, the winner of the Canada-Mexico challenge will play in the semifinals against Dominican Republic, and the loser will do it against Costa Rica with the same goal of that of Cubans.

The discussion for the gold and bronze medals will be on Friday, as well as positions 5th to 8th.

The top 4 qualify for the *Final Four* and the 1st place will get the ticket to *Rio de Janeiro 2016*, while the 2nd and 3rd ones will go to the play-off events.

Football

With the match between the U-23 teams of Panama and Cuba the *CONCACAF Men's Olympic Qualifying of Football* kicks off today in the US city of Kansas City.

The Panamanians, led by Argentine coach Leonardo Pipino, have a compact and experienced team with players coming from the *FIFA U-20 New Zealand-2015* and *Pan-American Toronto-2015*, so are the favorites.

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