
World Cup Dream of Cuban Soccer; Doable First Step

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Knowing the draw for the second round of qualifiers in the Confederation of North, Central America and the Caribbean football (Concacaf) towards the World Cup that will be co-organized by the United States, Mexico, and Canada in 2026, it's logical to think that the Cuban World Cup dream has an doable first step.

The Caribbean Lions were placed in group A, pitted against Honduras (the clear favorite), Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands.

The first qualifying round will start in March but will only be played by the four lowest-placed teams in the world ranking, in direct round-trip playoffs.

In June it will be the debut of our team in a phase that consists of six groups that will play a single game against each of the rivals in their group, two as home teams and two as visitors, a system similar to the one we experienced in the last League of Nations in terms of location and visitor.

This will take place during the FIFA dates scheduled until June 2025, and by then the first two in each group (12 in total) will advance to the final round, where the World Cup tickets will be distributed.

But we better focus on that initial round (for us), not just because it's the closest in time, but because it is where we can perform better.

Honduras is expected to reach one of the two places in this group and the closest competition will be for second place in the group, where Cuba has a chance of passing if it manages to return its best players who are active abroad, absent in the most recent calls.

When this process began and they began to line up footballers with experiences abroad beyond the Cuban Federation, there were great expectations to at least do a good job, but the illusions faded a little after the last presentations of our national team.

As we mentioned before, there are only four games and there's not much margin for error, especially when facing Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands.

I still think with our A-team we can compete, but we have already seen that it becomes very difficult to prevail if we have to move the lineup too much, and that's why it will be important to grease the machinery in the FIFA dates next month, especially taking into account that it's a fairly recent technical team in charge.

In fact, several of our main figures have not yet debuted with this brand new directive, and that's precisely one of their main tasks: smoothing over rough edges to return to the hopeful course we took about a year ago.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff
