
Cuban Soccer as Expected in World Cup Qualifying

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi

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In the absence of official confirmation, the balance at the beginning of the World Cup dream of the Cuban soccer team was within expected.

We say this because no one was counting on a victory against Honduras in the debut, and they did against the Cayman Islands in the second match, although the negative note was that the latter did not play after the refusal of the Caymanians to travel to the island to play the match.

Here politics mixed with sport again, since the absence was due to the fear of several of its players of losing their student visa in the United States if they visited Cuba.

Traditionally this is always considered forfeit, and translates into three points and a 3-0 victory for those who did attend the event, in this case the Cubans, a decision that if carried out as expected would place the Caribbean Lions second in their group.

Appealing to memory, this is the first time that these unilateral measures come out in favor of Cuba, which constantly suffers every time an event or sports meeting is held on U.S. soil, and on many occasions ends with the absence of our representatives.

It was of no use that the North, Central American and Caribbean Football Confederation (Concacaf) was based in Miami, since it could not demand fair treatment for the Cayman Islands and this is a lack of professional seriousness.

Sportingly it has the fact that we're where we wanted to be, but in practice it's disastrous that this team has not taken the field at the Antonio Maceo stadium, since precisely hours of flight is what it needs to know what it's playing and it only had as background that the 1-0 against Nicaragua in the friendly two months ago.

In theory, our team had to beat their Caribbean opponents anyway, but that friction was fundamental, in addition to

the emotional boost and confidence towards the renewed coaching staff for the future.

It also served to erase a little the poor image left against Hondurans, because although we did not come out as favorites by any means, we once again showed the blunders in defense of old.

These three points become important as they are against the Cayman Islands, who in the first match defeated the other rival in the key, Bermuda, and now the playoffs will take a long break until next year.

That's why it was essential to see Yunielys Castillo's pupils in action, who will have to wait until September to play again, when they face Jamaica on the first day of the 2024-2025 Concacaf Nations League.

At the moment we continue to witness the rebirth of forward Maykel Reyes, who scored on the friendly match against Nicaragua and the defeat against the Hondurans, but I reiterate that we need Onel Hernández to advance.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff
