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## Football in Cuba, Expectations for 2025

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Returning to the highest level in the Confederation of North, Central America and the Caribbean (Concacaf) will be the main challenge for the Cuban national football team for 2025.

Although the year ended well with the pass to the next round of access to the Gold Cup, the overall balance is not positive, falling a step in our geographical area and closing with only three wins in the nine official matches played in the year. The positive thing here was that we finished with a favorable goal average (+3).

Early in June next year, the qualifying round for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada will take place, and if we pass the initial phase we would have other commitments in September, October and November, but we have not reached that stage since the qualifying process for the 1982 World Cup in Spain, so it's a very high goal.

The Gold Cup will be in the middle if we survive against Trinidad and Tobago in the double qualifying round in March, a commitment that must be very demanding for our team.

The presence of our best figures will be key to being able to meet these objectives, something that failed in the last 12 months as well.

The best of this 2024 was the futsal, which dominated the regional qualifiers and returned to a World Championship, and the qualification to the world event in the under-20 category, for the second time in history of this discipline in Cuba.

In the latter case, on the road to 2025 Chilean World Cup, there will be training camps in Cuba and preparation bases in Europe and Central America to seek the best possible result.

It's also important to keep training referees and coaches, in addition to promoting the hiring of players (there were 40 this year at different times and Leagues), and to rescue the national championships of several categories, which

were not held in 2024.

It seems that we will finally have the legendary La Polar field ready, a project that has been in economic collaboration with FIFA for 12 years and must be completed in February 2025, to play the Gold Cup qualifying round in Havana against the Trinidadians in March.

However, the focus must be on the Pedro Marrero stadium, with a capacity for 20 thousand spectators, for which three synthetic fields were acquired and work is beginning on the remodeling.

This is the natural home of Cuban football due to its larger infrastructure and location for popular access, and because the offices of the National Federation are also there.

The slips suffered in 2024 should serve to draw experience, because the 2025 calendar is much more demanding.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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