
Cuba Remains at the Top of Latin American Chess

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Cuban chess players have shown stable results in the past few years to rank the nation as one of the world's powerhouses in this sport as well as being the strongest team in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Those results are closely associated with the performance of Leinier Domínguez, who is currently ranked 11th on the International Chess Federation's list, thanks to a 2,760 point ELO, making him the best Latin American player on the list.

Domínguez started off this year with an excellent performance as he finished fifth at the Tata Steel tournament hosted by the Dutch city of Wijk aan Zee, where he won six points in 11 games.

Then he played at the tournament of Russian clubs where he joined the St. Petersburg's team, winning four games and drawing two to climb to 10th in the world rankings.

The performance and progress of Cuban chess also stems from the Capablanca In Memoriam Tournament hosted by this Caribbean nation.

Regarded as the strongest competition of its kind in the region, the tournament

honors Cuba's best chess player ever, José Raúl Capablanca, who was born in Havana on November 19, 1888. Capablanca was world champion from 1921 through 1927.

At the latest Capablanca In Memoriam tournament, held last May, the Elite group went down in history with the highest ELO average, of 2,721 points, for which it was included in FIDE's 19th category.

With 6.5 points in 10 games, Wesley So, from the Philippines, won the tournament, followed by the Cubans Lázaro Bruzón (5,5) and Leinier Domínguez (5.0).

So said he enjoyed playing in Cuba, where fans are disciplined and knows the game, adding that the result exceeded his expectations and he hoped to return to Havana.

The latest credential added by Cuban chess was the performance of its men's team at the recent World Chess Olympiad hosted by the Norwegian city of Tromsø, where it finished seventh to equal their country's best performance ever at this competition.

The Cuban team came ahead of nations like the United States, France and the Netherlands and did much better than in Istanbul two years ago when it was 11th.

Their results were as follows: seven wins, two draws and two defeats in a tournament that drew 1,900 competitors from 174 nations.

Meanwhile, China made history winning the Olympiad, while Hungary and India came in second and third. Russia's performance was disappointing once again as it finished fourth.

The results at Tromsø ratified Cuba as Latin America's chess powerhouse. Argentina was the region's second best at the recent Olympiad, finishing 18th, followed by Peru (19), Brazil (22), Colombia (41) and Venezuela (42).

However, Cuba's women's team did not do as well, tallying six wins, a draw and four defeats and finishing 30th. That result was well below expectations as they were fourth at the Olympiad hosted by the Russian city of Khanty Mansiysk in 2010.

Russia's female team secured their third consecutive title by beating Bulgaria in the last round. China was second and the Ukraine came in third.

Cuba's performance so far this year has reconfirmed its standing as one of the most respected nations in the world of chess.

