
Cuban Football with Renewed Hopes

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26/11/2025



The debut of the new era for the Cuban senior football team under the guidance of coach Pedro Pablo Pereira could not have gone better, after securing a pair of victories in the so-called Friendly Series of the Confederation of North, Central America and the Caribbean Association Football (Concacaf).

First, we must recall where we came from, with resounding failures against Caribbean rivals, to understand the magnitude of these two triumphs over Saint Lucia (3-0) and Martinique (2-0). These are not globally renowned teams, but they are serious opponents in our geographical area due to their French heritage.

On the pitch of the Cibao FC stadium, in the Dominican city of Santiago de los Caballeros, the Cuban senior team recovered positive feelings with young figures seeking to establish themselves in this new cycle.

For three years, Cuba had not scored more than once in successive matches. If we add to this two clean sheets, the result gains even greater relevance, as this has been one of our major problems, even more so now with a predominantly young squad.

The first goal for the senior national team by Alessio Raballo was also important for confidence. The young man born in Italy to a Cuban mother, who currently plays in the youth division of Cremonese, is expected to be one of the faces of the new Antillean squad, especially since Onel Hernández and Luis Javier Paradella are not always available due to physical problems.

Coming from where we come from, hopes sprout like wildflowers in a forgotten field and hope unfolds before us like a butterfly's wing that aspires to touch the sky. But it is understandable.

Each hope is a journey into the unknown, dreaming of the unattainable and yearning for what seems foreign, but nothing stops us from getting excited again about this new generation, which already made a statement in the past U-20 World Cup.

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Published on Cuba Si (<http://cubasi.cu>)

Evidently, it is still early to sound the bells of triumph, and we must face more demanding opponents to truly know how far this new project can go. But the first step has been solid, and apparently sufficient to at least return to the top level of Concacaf in the future, a level we should not have left last year.

It is still premature to think beyond that, and as many months pass between one call-up and another, the modifications can be numerous and for various reasons.

The next FIFA date will be in March of next year, and our team must face the Dominican Republic and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, also in Quisqueyan lands.

Let us hope that these initial signs are confirmed within a few months, but for now, it is time to celebrate.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
