



DRSEA INFORMER

Volume II, Issue 8: A Publication For Your Reading Enjoyment

DRSEA Generando Interes (DRSEA Generating Interest) – Now that we have a response form connected to our website, www.drsea.org, we have been getting dozens of inquires about the Dominican Republic Sports & Education Academy from colleges interested in bringing in Dominican athletes to their schools, from young players around the world interested in attending the DRSEA, and from their parents who have expressed an interest in their sons attending.

Unfortunately, the earliest we will be opening our doors is September 2010, assuming the economy improves and we can get on with our game plan. A little more than a year ago, we were on a roll, having identified land we were interested in, a person to raise money for the project, and even investors interested in bankrolling the project. Much of that collapsed with the economy and we have had to revamp our plans, but we still are committed to success, to realizing the dream, so please continue to send your inquiries about the DRSEA. The number of colleges and universities interested is both heartwarming and encouraging, particularly those who talk about the nurturing environment they believe they can offer to student athletes. Hey, there is no doubt there is an abundance of great baseball players in the Dominican Republic; finding the right environment is what is going to take time, so identifying some of them now is important.

There are a number of players we have identified right now who meet, or will meet, the minimum academic standards the National Collegiate Athletic Association requires of students from the Dominican Republic to receive athletic scholarships at their member institutions and we would like to see them recruited, but it is difficult getting college baseball coaches a “look” at perspective players, since those players are basically talented unknowns who are not being recruited.

We had hoped to showcase their talents with some sort of clinic or camp this summer, but NCAA rules and regulations seem to prevent that:

13.11.1 - Prohibited Activities.

A member institution, on its campus or elsewhere, shall not conduct (or have conducted on its behalf) any physical activity (e.g., practice session or test/tryout) at which one or more prospective student-athletes (as defined in Bylaws 13.11.1.1 and 13.11.1.2) reveal, demonstrate or display their athletics abilities in any sport except as provided in Bylaws 13.11.2 and 13.11.3. (Revised: 1/14/09)

The NCAA has been very helpful in pointing out the rules and regulations, and we are not looking for loopholes or ways to circumvent those rules and regulations; just give worthy kids in the Dominican Republic the opportunity to obtain baseball scholarships and get a good education. We welcome our readers’ thoughts on how we can showcase some of that talent without breaking NCAA rules. And if we could hear from more college coaches who are interested in maybe getting some of these talented baseball players to their campuses, maybe we can make some introductions to this untapped talent pool. ***UN PASO MAS Y LLEGAMOS.***

Grandes Ligas Investigando Escandalos en RD (MLB Looking Into Dominican Scandals) – Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig has given Major League Baseball's security division carte blanche to investigate off-field scandals in the Dominican Republic and other foreign countries. Major League Baseball has officials in the Dominican Republic working with the FBI on at least two major scandals implicating the Chicago White Sox and Washington Nationals involving falsified ages and identities, skimmed money bonuses, and steroid use.

It is estimated that more than 70 young players who are being investigated, including some top prospects. If the players are found to have falsified their names, birth dates or other information, they could jeopardize their chances to obtain visas, essentially putting their careers in peril. The Commissioner's Office got involved when White Sox personnel director Dave Wilder was found to have smuggled cash into the United States, and the resulting investigation revealed a major scandal involving kickbacks of cash that was supposed to be bonus money paid to teenage prospects.

Suenos de Baloncesto (Hoop Dreams) – Baseball may be king, but basketball is gaining momentum, what with four Dominicans in the NBA and another dozen or so playing for major college teams, basketball is rapidly gaining in popularity. The Dominican Republic has its own professional league, as well as several amateur leagues, and hoop dreams are being fostered on a daily basis in cities throughout the Dominican Republic as pickup games are becoming a common sight.

I spent part of a recent weekend in Santiago, the Dominican Republic's second largest city after Santo Domingo and sat down to catch a pickup game in the shadow of the 67 meter *Monument a los Heroes de la Restauracion* (Monument to the Heroes of the Restoration). The dictator Rafael Trujillo had the monument constructed to honor him, but after his death it was renamed to honor those who lost their lives in the *War of Restoration*. You can climb the stairs of the monument and get magnificent views of Santiago and the surrounding area.



This particular basketball court in Santiago was lit for night-time play, with an eager bunch of ballers running up and down the concrete court with abandon. Tough D doesn't appear to be part of their game, and most of the players have never seen a shot they didn't like, launching jumpers and set shots from any distance with surprising accuracy.

The things that stand out about these Latino Jordans is that none are over 6 feet tall and their jerseys and below-the-knee shorts are well worn, as is their footwear, evidence of not only time spent honing their game, but also the dearth of fundamental equipment. However, the language of the court is universal, as players call their own fouls in English, and shout, "Outside, outside," when the ball meanders out of bounds.

These guys may not be ready for the NBA, but they have embraced the game. The NBA and FIBA would be wise to invest in the development of basketball in the Dominican Republic. As Dominican stars emerge in the NBA and in the collegiate ranks, the sport is being picked up more and more by young people looking for an alternative to baseball, and generating a thirst for all things basketball. This one should be a slam dunk.

And, while Dominicans are not known for being particularly tall, there is hope. A year or so ago I visited a practice involving about 20 young players. One stood out in particular. He was about 6'8", with a body reminiscent of Lebron James, and his raw talent much in evidence. His coaches said what made him a great prospect was his willingness to learn the game, to be coached. He was only 14 years old!



A pickup game in Santo Domingo

Manteniendo Comunicacion (Staying Connected) – If you enjoy reading the **DRSEA INFORMER**, and think others might as well, how about making us part of YOUR website. Please put a link to the DRSEA (www.drsea.org) on your website so that others can follow our development and perhaps even support the effort. We also hope you will pass on the **INFORMER** to interested people in hopes we can get them on the mailing list.

New **INFORMER** Feature!

From time to time, DRSEA co-founder Harold Mendez will contribute his point of view, written in Spanish. Here is his first article.

El Mensaje De Méndez

“Jugador Dominicano capturados utilizando esteroides”, “Jugador Dominicano Falsificala edad para jugar en las grandes ligas”, “Jugadores Dominicanos engañados por Buscones!” Ustedes han visto estos y muchos otros títulos en todos los periódicos y ESPN en los últimos meses. Parece que todo el mundo está ahora reconociendo los problemas que han plagado el sistema de beisbol en la República Dominicana desde hace años! Por qué la mayor atención! ¿Sera porque durante demasiado tiempo ahora, todos los involucrados en el sistema de béisbol Dominicano se ha beneficiado de la situación actual? ¿Sera que el dinero dado a los perspectivas Dominicanos ha llegado tan alto que la gente está empezando a prestar más atención a lo que está ocurriendo allí? ¿Podría ser que la gente está despertando finalmente a la dura realidad que acompaña a todo el país que ha puesto su futuro en las espaldas del próximo Pedro Martínez o David Ortiz?

Independientemente de cuál sea la situación, no hay duda de que el sistema actual en la República Dominicana ha creado riqueza para muchos involucrados en el beisbol, no menos importante, unos cuantos jugadores que pasaron de nada y ahora tienen mansiones en las comunidades más exclusivas del pais. Si bien aún queda mucho por decir sobre lo que está pasando en la RD, es importante que el enfoque cambie a como mejorar la situación.

Varias organizaciones están involucradas en hacer precisamente eso. Las Grandes Ligas, aunque principalmente esta en el negocio de la creación de súper-estrellas de beisbol, durante varios años ha incluido un componente

educativo para sus academias en la RD. Varias otras organizaciones, incluida la DRSEA, tienen o están en proceso de desarrollar vías de educación para muchos de estos jóvenes. Sin duda, la educación ayudara a resolver muchos de los problemas que existen actualmente dentro del sistema. Desde el principio, el DRSEA y todos los que han participado en el desarrollo de esta academia, han creído en la necesidad de crear un mejor medio ambiente a través de la educación. Le pedimos que continúe haciendo su parte en el apoyo a nuestra misión y así juntos ayudar a crear el cambio!

Otras Noticias De Interés (Other News of Interest)

Investment Capital – Economic crisis notwithstanding, Santo Domingo is on its way to becoming the shopping center of the Caribbean, if it hasn't already reached that status. Construction is well under way for Swedish home furnishing center Ikea, and Grupo CCN will soon be opening its Jumbo supermarket in the Luperon commercial district. La Sirena is also investing in the area. Plaza Lama is working on another mega store on Avenida Maximo Gomez at the intersection with Nicolas de Ovando, and another at Av. Charles de Gaulle in Santo Domingo East. Newly opened in Santo Domingo is the Papa John pizza franchise, and Americana Departamentos is moving fast on its new expansion at JF Kennedy, across the street from Ikea, as reported in Listin Diario.

Honesty Has Its Rewards – Navy Chief Vice Admiral Homero Luis Lajara Sola has announced that the yet-to-be-identified Navy officer who turned down a drug bribe will be promoted for his courageous efforts. The Executive Branch has signed off the young officer's promotion order. The interception of a suspected smuggling ring in the eastern province of La Altagracia was announced last month. The group was apprehended after trying to bribe a member of the Navy with RD\$300,000 and a 2009 Mitsubishi Montero in return for being allowed to continue with their operations. The arrested individuals include two Dominicans and a Cuban.

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Please feel free to pass the **DRSEA INFORMER** on to others you feel might be interested in being updated on what we are doing or send their e-mail to including them on the mailing list. The **INFORMER** is published on a regular basis; back issues are available upon request.