

A Tale of Two World Series: Amateurs Cry Foul

By LIONEL MARTIN
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HAVANA, Dec. 8.—While the so-called world series of amateur baseball is being played here, a similar international series is under way in Managua, Nicaragua, and the International Olympic Committee has been called upon to restore the divided factions.

Juan Isa of Curacao, head of the International Federation of Amateur Baseball (F.I.B.A.), says he would welcome an Olympic investigation into the division created in the sport from what he called the breakaway by the World Amateur Federation (F.E.M.B.A.).

Isa's organization will complete its 20th world series Monday.

Said Isa:

"Ours is the only legitimate event. The tournament being staged in Nicaragua is a rump affair with lots of money behind it and smelling of politics."

He said that his group was approved by the I.O.C. for the first time on May 9, 1954, in Athens, and that it was the only international baseball federation listed in the 1973 directory published by the I.O.C.

Jose Beracasa, president of the Pan American Sports Organization and a member of the I.O.C., warned National Committees that if baseball federations in their countries sent teams to the Nicaraguan series, they would not be eligible to participate later in the Pan-American Games.

Despite this warning, Isa declared, many federations

sent teams to Nicaragua and boycotted the Havana series. Isa said that the Olympics committees of these nations would be asked why they permitted the national baseball federations to defy the warning.

Isa said that in some cases the Winnipeg charter of 1967 was violated by the baseball federations that sent teams to Nicaragua. This charter stipulates that when two national federations schedule games, they must receive approval from the Olympic committees of both the visiting and host country.

In the cases of Mexico, Puerto Rico and Italy, the Olympic committees did forbid their national amateur baseball federations from participating in the Nicaraguan series.

U.S. Among Defiant

Those federations that have sent teams to Managua are: United States, Canada, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, the German Federal Republic, San Marino, Sweden, France, Spain, Belgium and Taiwan.

Those represented in Havana are: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama, Dominican Republic, Mexico, the Dutch Antilles and the Netherlands.

Isa believes that if the breakaway group turns out to be a money-making proposition (he calls its main leaders "businessmen"), then each member will go its way despite rulings by national Olympic committees or the I.O.C.

The president of F.I.B.A. says that F.E.M.B.A. was organized following the meeting of the F.I.B.A. executive committee in Curacao last May, at which Carlos Garcia of Nicaragua was suspended for one year.

The principal reason for Garcia's suspension was, according to Isa, his refusal to pay 5 per cent of the gate receipts, as stipulated by F.I.B.A. regulations, for the 20th world series, held in Managua in November of 1972.

Earthquake Is Alibi

Isa says that when the series had finished, Garcia had paid for only three of the 15 days. When Garcia continued to resist, Isa turned the affair over to an auditing firm in Managua to investigate the gate receipts and to recommend action.

Almost a month after the 1972 Managua series, the Nicaraguan earthquake struck. Isa says that Garcia contended that all accounts of the series had been destroyed in the disaster. Isa claims, however, to have a written report from the auditor proving that the ticket stubs and other records had survived the earthquake, but were later destroyed.

At the F.I.B.A. congress in Managua during the 1972 world series, both Nicaragua and Cuba sought to be host nations for the 1973 event.

Dutch Fehring of the United States declared that if Cuba was chosen, he would not allow his team to compete. This was in keeping with Fehring's attitude of refusing United States

baseball teams permission to compete in Cuba.

After a heated debate, Nicaragua was chosen as the host nation for the second year in a row, and Cuba wound up as substitute nation.

Payment Falls Short

As the meeting of the F.I.B.A. executive committee approached last May, it was rumored that Garcia would be sanctioned for his violation of F.I.B.A. regulations.

Isa says that in early May, unknown to F.I.B.A. Garcia sent a check to the F.I.B.A. account in a Panama bank as payment for the 1972 series. The amount paid by Garcia was \$14,740. Isa says that informed estimates calculate the correct amount due F.I.B.A. to be in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

Shortly before the May meeting, Garcia and Fehring invited the representatives of some national baseball federations to a meeting in Miami, "with all expenses paid," according to Isa.

From there, Garcia and others went to Curacao. When they arrived, they found that Garcia already had been suspended by F.I.B.A.

In view of the sanction and the general attitude of the Nicaraguan Federation of Amateur Baseball, F.I.B.A. decided to move the 21st world series to Havana.

In subsequent months, F.E.M.B.A. was organized. It decided to hold its international series in Managua.

Hints of Politics

Isa asserts that F.E.M.B.A.

has big financial backing. It is rumored, he says, that General Samoza's Nicaraguan Government is helping to underwrite the organization.

Isa says that he has proof that F.E.M.B.A. had given \$12,000 to the Columbia federation, although fares for the entire team should not have cost more than half that amount. (Under F.I.B.A. rules, the host nation pays only 10 fares for the visiting team and provides housing facilities and food.)

Isa says that the breakaway is in part politically inspired by the enemies of Cuba and that Gen. Samoza is a strong enemy of the Cuban revolution.

Isa points out that, while Fehring has blacklisted Cuba, he has welcomed South Africa as a member of F.E.M.B.A. despite the black-list imposed on it for its racial discrimination by the I.O.C.

Lionel Martin is a Canadian broadcasting correspondent stationed in Havana.

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