

6/2/83

PA 68

outfielder barbaro garbey has admitted that he and some cuban teammates were paid oo fix games in havana in 1978. garbey, 26, a member of the cuban national team in 1976 and 1977, said he took money in exchange for helping to keep six or seven games close because he needed it to support his family. garbey said he was making 95 pesos a month playing baseball in cuba. he says he was suspended in 1978 along with as many as 80 other players accused of wrongdoing. that suspension, he says, helped convince him to leave cuba in the "freedom flotilla" of 120,000 cubans in 1980. his wife and two daughters, lyjani, 6, and dunia, 3, and his wife's family still are in cuba. he lives in miami in the off season and plays outfield with the evansville triplets, a detroit tigers farm club in the class aaa american associaton. there is interest in this item here because garbey is considered a bona fide major league prospect. the baseball commissioner's office is said to be investigating. obviously, this could affect his chances for major league advancement. can you confirm these details or add any additional information? was this a publicized event in 1978? how well known is garbey among cuban baseball officials? what is his reputation? what was his specific role in the game-fixing? who else was involved? what were the penalties? what was the public reaction to the game-fixing? how serious an offense is this considered to be? are cuban officials aware that he is now a major league prospect in the united states? we are interested in anything you can give us on this subject, including clippings. please keep us advised of your progress and let us know when you can file.

Handwritten: Cuban
Major League
Illustrated

regards.

Handwritten: Sports Illustrated

Handwritten: Service
ILLINOIS

thanks and albest,
elaine

exlional martin (havane) june 3, 1983

in reply to query here is data amassed on barbero garbey who is now major league prospect. had to dig and do interviews since info about defects not forthcoming here. believe 200 dollars would be right if you agree send to my sisters house in yonkers (lional martin/ 23 priscilla avenue/ yonkers 10719)

barbero garbey was well known to sports fans and baseball officials here as an up and coming star when his career came to unexpected and in cube in 1978.

in 1976, at the age of twenty, he batted .323 in regular season play and in the following year was made a member of the highly selective cuban national baseball team, the world's champion amateurs. that year, 1977, in a special all-cuban series called "the series of dignity" (ironical in view of the scandal that was in the making) garbey batted a healthy .343 - a sixth place spot in view of cuba's extremely powerful team. (that was the year in which whitey ford, on a visit to cuba, commented that many of the cuban players were major league material).

according to fans and baseball officials alike here in cuba, garbey was an all-round player - excellent bat and capable of playing the outfield (usually right field) and infield (usually third base) with equal grace. in an interview published in cuba's top magazine (bohemia) in 1977 garbey indicated his precocious baseball savvy: "batting is a question of analysis. one has to know in a given moment how to react to a pitch, its not a question of capric or precipitation. its a matter of adjusting oneself to the crucial moment."

like other cuban players, garbey received no pay for his baseball playing. following the prohibition of professional sports in 1960, the rule was that athletes continue to receive the monthly checks from their work centers while playing. in theory, other workers were supposed to take up the slack created by the athletes absence. in cuban terms, this mean that the players might be off the job for from 100 to 150 days a year. garbey, totally unskilled in trades other than baseball, earned the minimum wage (95 pesos) in a country where the average monthly wage at the time was about 150 pesos.

juan luis suse, head of cuba's amateur baseball federation told me that in 1978 garbey was among 25 baseball players who were suspended for life for all organized athletic activities in cuba. the charge is that they accepted bribes from gamblers to do what they could to throw games - striking out in the clutch or fielding badly in close games. the 25 were suspended under a resolution of the national sport's institute. others were investigated an absolved or got off with warning. the gamblers themselves, nobody knows how many, were tried in cuban courts and sentenced. it is held they had the book thrown at them because cuba prides itself on the purity of its sports life.

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suse said there was no reason for garbey to have accepted the bribes. he said many live within their means even with the minimum salary inasmuch as that in cuba is ten percent of ones salary. public health care and education are free and public transport costs a nickel. he said that garbey's brother, rolando garbey who was one of cuba's top boxers in the mid 1970's (he won three consecutive pan-american games gold medals) lived mmyis low salary but by going to school and studying raised his earning power considerably. suse said rolando is now a boxing coach helping to train the angolan national team. barbara garbey, a sister, is also an outstanding track and field athlete. he indicated they do not share their brothers views and added +barbey prostituted himself and brought dishonour to cuban sports.+ he said barbey admitted accepting bribes. another government source said: +it was not a one shot deal. barbey, according to his own admission, accepted bribes and participated in a systematic way in selling games from 1976 until he was suspended in 1978+

suse told me he recently recieved a letter from robert smith, president of aiba (american amateur baseball federation) asking him to forward data on garbey. he said he was preparing a report but couldn't say whe it would be finished.

the 1978 +black bean scandel+ was not the last. in march 1982 17 of cuba's top baseball players and coaches were suspended for life for helping to fix games. the players records were even expunged from the record books. at the time the cuban government announced it has +discovered a network of bankers, bookies and middlemen wh, through corrupt, ignoble and immoral conduct, earned rewarding profits.+ it went on to say that +profits, egotism, individualism, mercantile spirit and lack of respect for the people are attitudes that cannot be tolerated in a society of workers.+ it added: +they are the practices of a capitalist society that have been banished from our nation forever.+

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eleanor - please let me know by telex if recvd and if o.k. thanks and love/lionel

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eleanor milosovic (urgent)
sports illustrated
june #4, 1983 10:00am

MORALITY

eleanor (axlione) martin - havana) -- here is additional data as requested on barbaro garbey. more about his specific playing record might be forwarded before 3 pm but should add that some info requested not available now in depth. i think following, however, should add good insights.

garbey played for the havana industriales which, in the years 1976-1978 (those in which garbey played) regularly vied for first place in the +cuban national selective season+ with the +ve rpt +vegueros+ (tobacco growers) of pinar del rio, a city in western cuba. in 1976, at the age of 19, he played on the cuban national team that won the world amateur championship in colombia. during the regular seasons of 1976 and 1977 he batted over .300 (i mentioned .329 in 1976.

he was among several industriales players suspended in the crackdown in 1978 in which 25 ballplayers were suspended for life. another one of his teammates, the promising julian villar also found himself banned from all organized athletics due to the scandal.

he was considered an excellent prospect but one of many among the host of cuban ballplayers. cuba was the regular world amateur champion in those years and the loss of garbey did not reduce the cuban teams comparative power.

according to officials here, garbey committed the gravest infractions possible in +systematically during more than two seasons accepting money to help throw games or to keep them close+. gamblers often took bets on number of runs a team would make, the score spread between them as well as who would win. this meant that an error, a strikeout or hitting into a double play at a crucial moment could be beneficial to the gamblers. garbey admitted, authorities here say, that he took part in these game fixing devices - not as a one shot deal but regularly from his first year in the equivalent of the cuban big leagues. sports fans, officials here and family members of garbey have no sympathy with his claim that he accepted money because his regular salary was low. one sports writers said he doesn't expect the american public to understand this attitude of the cubans since in the united states morality seems to be a matter of who can make more money+ (cuban sports writer - a well known one).

the sports writer said that garbey's family were known as +solid revolutionaries who felt that garbey's delinquency and abandonment of the country was a betrayal.+ his brother rolando garbey (world amateur lightmiddleweight champion - havana 1974) and three time panamerican gold medal winner) is known to have strongly condemned his brothers +desertion+. rolando glories in his role as +internationalist+ as he helps to develop and train the angolans national team. barbara's sister, mercie garbey is also proud of her patriotic and revolutionary outlook according to friends of the family. he is cuba's (one of cuba's top women athletes who competes in the long jump (broad jump) and also runs in the 4 x 100 meter relays. i called the house of another of garbey's brothers. his sister in law answered: +i don't want to talk about him. i don't want to hear anything about him+ she said and hung up the phone. i called back and she said +look, we don't want to have anything to do with him+ and hung up again.

(correction - i incorrectly said +barbara garbey+ in first dispatch. this dispatch has it correct - +marcia garbey+

an attempt to locate garbey's wife and two children was futile. she is now living in santiago de cuba, with her relatives. according to friends of the family here, there is no indication that she wants to join her husband. they say that as far as they know she has not applied for leaving the country nor has she applied for an entry visa into the united states. it is also not known on this said if barbara has tried, by applications made in the united states, to try to bring his family over. (that should read +barbara has tried+ two lines up)

the garbeys, parents, brothers and sisters are said to fall a sense of shame over barbara-as indicated by the attitude of his sister in law.

if garbey makes good in the majors, the attitude toward him might change with time among sports fans and family here but, according to our sports writer source, it is doubtful that he will ever be able to rid himself of the stain of deserting the country. the writer said: +i have no doubt that the u.s. propagandist (rpt) propagandists will use him to tell the world of a rags to riches story in the united states without ever mentioning once that he seriously violated the ethical and official rules here and betrayed the peoples trust in a land where admission to all sports events is free of charge.+

(as to how many teams were involved in the suspensions - it has been impossible to learn at this time all the names but the scandal is known to have touched several of the teams in the cuban baseball league.)

that's it cleaner - digging here has its difficulties and i'll possibly come up with more in the future. people were not particularly cooperative when i tried to get pix. i took one out of a magazine but it has too little contrast to reproduce well. i'll try to send a bit of additional data on his playing record before 3 pm if my source comes through/ your man in havana/ liohel.

please confirm receipt of this cable/ rgs
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