

# Cuban athletes defect at games



**BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — Two Cuban baseball players defected to the United States for a shot at the major leagues. The Cuban delegation to the World University Games said it was no great loss to their country.

Since arriving for the games last week, the Cubans have lost three athletes from their 125-member delegation, their chief of mission, Manuel Morales Quintana, said Tuesday.

Shortstop Reynaldo Ordonez fled the team Monday, while pitcher Edilberto Oropesa defected Saturday. Fencer Giovanni Perez Gonzales disappeared Saturday and is believed to have defected, Quintana said.

Oropesa and Ordonez have turned up in Miami, where they said they plan to seek political asylum.

Quintana said Ordonez and Oropesa were not starters for the Cuban team, which is favored to win the gold medal at the WUGs. There are thousands of other talented ballplayers in Cuba, and the defections were having little effect on the rest of the team, he said.

Even so, Quintana said the Cuban team might take precautions to prevent more defections.

Quintana noted that the team defeated Taiwan 8-4 after the first defection Saturday, when Oropesa jumped a fence at Sal Maglie Stadium in Niagara Falls and fled in a car driven by his cousin.

Oropesa and Ordonez were not being persecuted in Cuba and were free to seek asylum in the United States, Quintana said. But Oropesa could have defected in a less dramatic way, Quintana said.

"He could have just gone through the doorway. He didn't have to make it such a grand thing," Quintana said through a translator at a news conference.

Other Cuban athletes want to defect, but avoid talking about it because they fear Cuban officials,

Ordonez said. Ordonez fled with help from WCMQ radio, a Spanish-language station in Miami. His mother-in-law, who lives in Miami, called the station requesting help, and WCMQ sent its sales manager, Lazaro Megret, to Buffalo, a spokeswoman for the station said.

Quintana said Ordonez left the athletes village at the University of Buffalo with Megret, who tried to get other Cubans to defect, but none did.

"For many of our athletes, the proudest thing is to wear the Cuban name on their uniforms," he said.

In Miami on Tuesday, Ordonez echoed Oropesa's desire to play in the major leagues. Ordonez said he heard a broadcast of a Florida Marlins game in Cuba for the first time last week.

"I want to play for the Marlins," Ordonez said. Unlike St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Rene Arocha, who defected from Cuba in 1991, Oropesa and Ordonez are longshots to play in the major leagues. Neither were top players for Cuba, and the team the Cubans sent to the university games is third-rate compared with their national team, Quintana said.

Al Avila, the Marlins' assistant director of Latin American operations, said he didn't have any information about Ordonez. He added it was Oropesa's first time out of Cuba playing international ball.

"He's not a top prospect," Avila said. "If he was, he would have been on the national team."

Immigration officials in Florida said they could not comment on whether either player had asked for asylum.

John Ingham, who heads the immigration office in Buffalo, said the athletes entered the United States legally and might be allowed to stay.

"It's not as though they washed up on the beach in South Florida and just disappeared into the population," Ingham said.

# Researcher spends birthday in jail



**SPOKANE (AP)**

— A Washington State University researcher spent his 35th birthday behind bars Tuesday, jailed two months so far for refusing to tell a grand jury what he knows about an animal-rights group's 1991 raid.

Rik Scarce contends that no amount of time in a lockup will get him to talk and that he is being punished for not cooperating with the federal investigation.

"I'm in here with 549 other men and women who are here for punishment, and I'm not treated any differently," Scarce told the Moscow-Pullman Daily News in an interview at the Spokane County Jail.

"This will be the worst birthday of my life."

U.S. District Judge Fremming Nielsen, who found Scarce in contempt April 6 and ordered him jailed May 14, has said Scarce would be released immediately if he changed his mind about testifying.

U.S. Attorney Carroll Gray said his office filed a written objection Monday to a motion by Scarce's lawyer seeking his client's release.

"We still think he should be held until he responds to the questions," Gray said Tuesday.

A group calling itself the Animal Liberation Front claimed responsibility for the August 1991 raid at Washington State University in which research

animals were uncaged and offices and computer equipment damaged.

Scarce, a graduate student in sociology, is the author of "Eco-Warriors," a book on radical environmental and animal-rights groups.

He contends it would be unethical for him to disclose confidential conversations he had with possible suspects in the Washington State break-ins because the discussions were part of his research, said his attorney, Jeffrey Finer.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco has rejected Scarce's contention that he has a writer's and scholar's privilege to keep promises of confidentiality to his subjects.



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