



EL OBSERVADOR

Weathermen Predict Weak El Nino Over Next Few Months

GENEVA (AP) — The El Nino weather phenomenon, which caused thousands of deaths during its last appearance, is returning in weakened form, United Nations scientists predicted Tuesday.

"This coming event is nowhere near on that scale," said Michael Coughlan, director of the World Meteorological Organization's climate program. "However, that doesn't preclude individual events that may be quite damaging."

The last El Nino in 1997-8 set off fatal storms, heat waves, fires, floods and drought, and caused an estimated \$32 billion in property damage.

U.N. meteorologists "have seen some indication of El Nino" in recent weeks, Coughlan said. As yet they can only predict climate trends until early 2002 and cannot say whether El Nino will strengthen or decline next year, he added.

During an El Nino, winds that normally blow east to west over the equator ease, and surface waters in the eastern Pacific warm.

The warming of the eastern Pacific Ocean, coupled with changes in air pressure, can alter the course of the upper air jet stream that steers weather movement, resulting in changes in precipitation around the world.

Most typically, rains increase on the Pacific coast of Latin America, while areas like Indonesia and northern Australia have lower rainfalls than usual, but the phenomenon can affect weather across the globe.

Until returning to a "neutral" situation a few months ago the world was in a La Nina phenomenon — in which trade winds in the eastern Pacific strengthen, resulting in cooler surface waters in the eastern Pacific.

Little League Star's Age Prompts Forfeits

BY ANDRES CALA, AP STAFF
WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — A Little League team from New York City, which included a pitcher who turns out to be two years too old, will have to forfeit all of its victories this year.

That announcement was made by Little League officials Friday in Pennsylvania.

Little League star Danny Almonte is 14, not 12 — a finding that cost his team its third-place World Series finish and left his father facing criminal charges.

All the victories won by his Bronx, N.Y., team, the Rolando Polino Little League All-Stars, were forfeited, and all its records — including Almonte's perfect game — were wiped out.

"Clearly, adults have used Danny Almonte in a most contemptible and despicable way," said Stephen D. Keener, president and CEO of Little League Baseball in South Williamsport, Pa.

But Keener said no action will be taken against Danny himself — and that he's welcome to take part in older divisions of the youth baseball organization.

The Bronx league's founder, Rolando Polino, also was banned for life from any association with Little League, although the team's charter was not revoked.

A birth certificate showing the ace pitcher is 12 was found to be false, said Manuel Ramon Morel Cerda, the president of the Dominican Electoral Committee, which is in charge of most public records.

The government plans to charge the boy's father, Felipe de Jesus Almonte, with falsifying documents, and was considering

charges against the mother, Sonia Rojas Breton, Cerda said.

Little League rules prohibit any player born before Aug. 1, 1988, from competing this year.

Rojas, who lives in the town of Moca, has a handwritten, photocopied birth certificate that said her son was born April 7, 1989. But Moca's official records office has another birth certificate that said he was born April 7, 1987.

Another handwritten document from Dr. Toribio Bencosme Hospital in Moca states that a woman named Rojas gave birth to a boy there on April 7, 1987. Rojas, who says she gave birth to Almonte at home in the nearby town of Jamao, insists all documents but hers are false.

Victor Romero of the public records office in Santo Domingo investigated Almonte's birth documents in Moca, about 90 miles north of the capital. He also investigated records from the nearby town of Jamao, where Almonte's mother said he was born.

Officials found the birth certificate from Jamao to be false after speaking to the witnesses who had signed the birth certificate. The witnesses denied knowing the family or having signed the birth certificate, Morel said.

The town official from Jamao who registered Danny's age as 12 last year has been suspended, he said.

"There are a number of contradictions in the second birth certificate," Romero said, referring to the document listing the 1989 date. "Neither the witnesses, the hospital, nor the local authorities could confirm Almonte was born in



Baseball players from outside the United States show team solidarity during the Little League World Series playoff that was held from Aug. 17 - 26 in Williamsport, Pa.

Jamao."

The boy was brought to New York by his father, who has insisted his son was 12.

At a news conference earlier Friday in the Bronx, Paulino said he would abide by the decision.

"I trust all the parents in the league to present original documents," said Paulino, who was flanked by team members and parents — but not the Almontes. "If the parents lie to the league that is not my problem. I accept the information that the parents gave to me."

Danny Almonte was the most dominating pitcher at the World Series this year, throwing a perfect game in the opener against Apopka, Fla. He struck out the first 15 Apopka batters in the first perfect game in 44 years at the tournament.

He followed that with a one-hit shutout in the U.S. semifinals against an Oceanside, Calif., team that came in averaging .333 with five batters at .500 or better.

He finished the tournament with 46 strikeouts, giving up only three hits in three starts. A run scored in last inning of his final game was the only run scored on

Almonte all summer.

Behind Almonte's pitching and a solid defense, the Bronx team went 4-1 at the World Series and finished third. The team's only loss was a rematch against Apopka in which Almonte couldn't pitch because of a rule that prohibits pitchers from starting consecutive games.

Almonte became a sensation after throwing 16 strikeouts in the Mid-Atlantic Regional championship against State College. His perfect game only added to his reputation, and major leaguers Randy Johnson and Ken Griffey Jr. both contacted Almonte to wish him luck.

Meanwhile, a U.S. official who asked not to be identified, said Almonte and his father are in the United States illegally. They applied to come to the United States in June 2000 and were issued tourist visas, but the visas expired six months after their arrival, the official said.

Little League officials have said his immigration status did not affect his eligibility since all that is required is that a child be of age and that a parent or legal guardian live in the community he represents.

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Peru looks to extradite Fujimori from Japan

LIMA, Peru (AP) — With homicide charges against former President Alberto Fujimori imminent, Peruvian officials are considering how to persuade Japan to turn over the exiled leader to account for alleged crimes against humanity, the prime minister said Tuesday.

In a special session, Peru's Congress voted unanimously to lift Fujimori's immunity so he can face homicide and forced disappearance charges in relation to two state-sponsored massacres in the early 1990s.

Prosecutors must file the charges within five days.

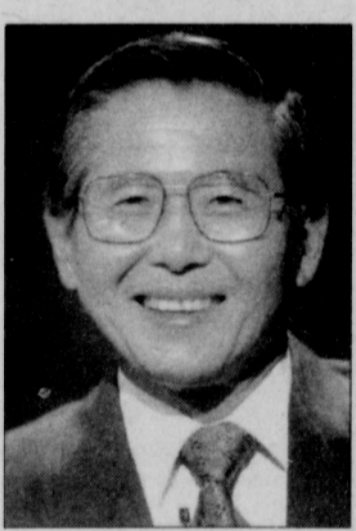
But Fujimori has been in his parents' native Japan since November, when his 10-year-old government collapsed under the weight of mounting corruption scandals, and his extradition to Peru appears unlikely.

Japan announced Fujimori was entitled to citizenship shortly after he arrived, and Japanese law prohibits the extradition of its citizens to stand trial for crimes committed in other countries.

Fujimori, who so far only faces charges of abandonment of office and dereliction of duty, denies any wrongdoing.

Peruvian legal experts argue that Japan would have to try Fujimori in its own courts or send him to an international tribunal for charges of crimes against humanity, in compliance with international treaties.

But a senior official in the Japanese Justice Ministry's international division, who spoke on



Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori.

condition he not be named, ruled out the possibility of trying Fujimori in Japan for any crimes allegedly committed in Peru.

The official said unless the Japanese government has jurisdiction over the crimes in question the suspect couldn't be tried in Japan.

Japan signed an international treaty against torture in 1999, but it is only obliged to hand over suspects accused of torture that took place after the country joined the pact, the official said. The charges this week against Fujimori will be for death squad killings in 1991 and 1992.

The official also said that since Japan has not signed the U.N. treaty on international human rights tribunals, it would not be authorized to extradite Fujimori to an international human rights court such as the one in The Hague, Netherlands.