

# PODIUM

Journal of Science and Technology in Physical Culture

EDITORIAL LIBERCIENCIA

Volume 18  
Issue 2

2023

University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca"

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*Translated from the original in spanish*

**Editorial**

## *How handball came to Pinar del Río lands*

*De cómo el balonmano llegó a tierras pinareñas*

*Como o handebol chegou a Pinar del Río*

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*Received: 2023-05-01.*

*Approved: 2023-05-08.*



*Teachers* often guide their students to investigate the origins of a sport, it is not the intention to question the suitability of any specific source, but rather the deep-rooted tradition that the first thing they are going to consult is Wikipedia. In the case of the sport Handball, to cite an example, it would be very common for the data that predominated in the search to be general data of its culture. On the other hand, it would be too much to ask of this useful space that will also talk about the influence of this sport



through time and distance to reach the small island of Cuba. Much more difficult would be to ask him to provide us with information on how this sport came to the westernmost province of the country, Pinar del Río.

Based on this need is that we try to dedicate this editorial to the trajectory of Handball until it became that sport that we love so much in our country and in the Vueltabajera province.

According to Román (2015), Handball is a recently created sport, although there are experts who point out that its origins go back to antiquity, since in ancient Greece a ball game was practiced with the hand known as the *Ukraine Game*, in which the ball was the size of an apple and the players had to try not to keep it off the ground, Homer describes this game in the *Odyssey*.

In Roman times, a doctor named Claudio Galen recommended his patients to play Haposton , which was played with a ball. During the Middle Ages, the balls games with the hands were mainly practiced at Court.

However, according to González (2021), the modern origins of handball date from the end of the 19th century, when it was used as an implement to train and prepare gymnasts. In 1892 a gymnastics teacher, Konrad Koch, created the *Raffballspied*, with characteristics very similar to Handball. At that time in Czechoslovakia, a 7-player game called *Hazena was played in schools*, its first regulation appeared in 1905.

At the Danish High School, a gymnastics teacher, Holger Nielsen, in 1898 introduces a new game with a small ball, which was called *Haandbold*, it was about scoring goals in a goal, in a similar way to soccer, but handling it with the hands. The first technical publication of this game appeared in 1907 by Nielsen himself.

Historians give great strength to the Physical Education teacher from Berlin, specialized in women's gymnastics, Max Heiser, since from 1907 he played with his students in the main avenues of this German city, this game was called *Torball*. Later, in 1909 a compatriot of Heiser , Karl Schelenz invents a new game, *Handball* , inspired mainly by soccer, he regulates it, allowing the fight for the ball, taking 3 steps with the ball, a rebound to continue the race



or pass it and the size of the ball decreases, that is why the creation of this sport is attributed to this man.

At first, this game is hosted and regulated by the International Athletics Federation (IAAF). Schelenz, a coach in Germany, Austria and Sweden, is in charge of spreading it throughout Europe. In 1926, the IAAF, at its congress in The Hague, tackled the idea of creating its own regulations.

In 1925 the first international handball match of 11 players between Austria and Germany took place, the Austrians won 6-3. The growing number of countries that practice this sport brings with it the appearance in 1928 of the International Amateur Handball Federation (FIHA), which constituent congress takes place in Amsterdam (Holland) on August 4, on the occasion of the Olympic Games that they were disputed in said city, here the German Lang was appointed president of the Federation (Herrera, 2010).

#### *And how did handball come to Cuba?*

When the Cuban Revolution triumphed, there was a grate exodus of doctors, engineers, teachers and others to the United States of America. The country is in need of training future intellectuals who will comply with the broad program drawn up by the high leadership of the Party from Moncada and it is decided that several students study in the socialist countries of Europe and it is when a group of sports instructors who had studied in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) return to our homeland in 1964 bringing with them this new sport discipline that had achieved great development in the old continent. Handball begins to take its first steps in the Superior School of Physical Education (ESEF) "Comandante Manuel Piti Fajardo" and in some military units.

On March 11, 1973, at the *Vladimir I. Lenin Vocational School* in Havana City, the first international match was held in our country, between a Cuban national team and the Locomotiv club from Prague, Czechoslovakia. Cuban to Europe. On July 4, 1973, in the province of Santiago de Cuba, the first official game between Cuban teams was held, in that same year the first free national men's championship was called, with the participation of 9 teams and the National Handball Federation was created. on May 9, 1973.



*And once in Cuba, how did this sport move to Pinar del Río?*

According to what was stated by Rodríguez et al., (2017), on Martí street in front of *La Canosa hardware store*, the first handball match in the province was held, this was an exhibition carried out by the red and blue teams of the national preselection, which held a series of exhibition games throughout the nation with the purpose of promoting this incipient sport.

The places where this sport is begun practiced is in El Cacho, Los Palacios, where the military school "Camilo Cienfuegos (Camilito) (EMCC) was located and on the basketball court of the Pre-University of Pinar del Río, today the Rectorate of the University of this province. Among those who introduce handball in the territory we have *Ciro Irriarte Machuat*, *Eduardo Rizo* and *Jorge Luis Barrizonte*, as well as the teacher of the *camilitos* in Cacho, *Sergeant Eugenio Rodríguez*. The first provincial commissioner of this sport was the *Simón Triguero (el Cusi)*, original from *Las Minas* municipality, in 1975. The first coaches in the Sport Initiation School (EIDE) were *Carlos Martínez (Ventolera)* and *Echenique*.

The first team that represents the province was made up of, among others, *Carlos Martínez*, *Carlos Luís Morales*, *Rolando Morejon* and *Roberto Arencibia*.

The Pinar del Río EMCC team that occupies 1st place in the National Championship of this type in 1976, from the center was made up of; *Marcelino León*, *Alberto Madera*, *Luís Alberto Hernández Pérez (Beto)*, *Luis Mariano Hurtado Delis*, *Carlos Sánchez (El Ruso)*, *Tomas Dominguez*, *Ralin Campoamor*, *Santiago Angulo*, *Ismael Rubio*, among others and as coach: *Carlos Martínez (Ventolera)*.

In 1979 Pinar reached his first silver medal in youth tournaments and 1st male category and a 2nd place in school. Its first youth gold medal was in 1980, while the first gold medal in the 1st category was in 1981. In 1982, it obtained 4th place in the national championship of the 1st category for women. Pinar del Río along with Havana City and Santiago de Cuba are the provinces that have won the most important tournaments in our country, they have also been the ones that have contributed the most number of athletes to the national team, Pinar has several athletes who are Pan American and Central American champions and



others who have participated in world championships. In 1987 we hosted the Pan-American sports event where 7 athletes from Pinar del Río participated (Figure 1).

Outstanding handball athletes from Pinar del Río are: Juan Llanes , Osvaldo Povea, Modesto Quintana, Vladimir Rivero, Jose Carlos Hernandez Pola, Ricardo Miranda, Misael Zaldivar, Alberto Marquez, Guillermo Gavilan among others; and among the females we have: Haydes Hernández, Odaysis García, Maite Padrón, Maritza Ramírez, Viviana Perez, among others.

There were many who contributed to this beautiful sport and to the Cuban Handball school, with spirit and self-sacrifice that, even with very few resources, has managed to position itself within the first world countries.



*Fig. 1. - 1987 Pan American Games*



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### Conflict of interests:

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

### Authors' contribution:

The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents



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