

Cayman falls just shy of winning Nations League group



Defender Mason Duval attempts to elude the grasp of a Barbados player in Tuesday night's game. - Photo: CONCACAF

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Cayman's dream run to the top of the CONCACAF Nations League table ended Tuesday night, when Barbados defended its home turf and earned a 3-0 victory to win the group.

Both Cayman and Barbados finished with four wins and 12 points, but goal differential turned out to be the decisive statistic. Barbados was +10 over the course of six games despite losing 3-2 to Cayman back in September. Cayman, meanwhile, finished the six games at a -1 differential.

"I'm very, very pleased with how we've done across the six games," said national team coach Ben Pugh. "Of course, we're very disappointed not to have qualified and to miss out... on goal difference. But we're really pleased with how the players stood up against some really good competition."

Cayman hadn't won a game in nine years before competing in CONCACAF Nations League C, and it managed a win against each of its Group A opponents. Cayman beat the US Virgin Islands twice – both at home and on the road – and split the two-game series against Barbados and Saint Martin.

Perhaps most impressively, Cayman won all three of its games at Truman Bodden Sports Complex, and Pugh is pleased with the progress he's seen from his players on the biggest stage available.

"There were lots of positives that came out of this," he said. "It's obviously a very young squad, generally. We only have two or three players over the age of 24. It sets us

in good stead. We can continue to build in the future and do really good things. When it comes around next time to the qualifying – which I think starts in September – we'll be in a good place to look to qualify again."

Barbados carried 64% of the possession on Tuesday night and had twice as many correct passes (358) as Cayman (178).

Barbados had nine shots to Cayman's three, and Hallam Hope – who played for Carlisle United in England's League Two last season – scored twice to give the Bajans an edge.

Pugh said Hope's first goal in the 32nd minute changed the complexion of the game.

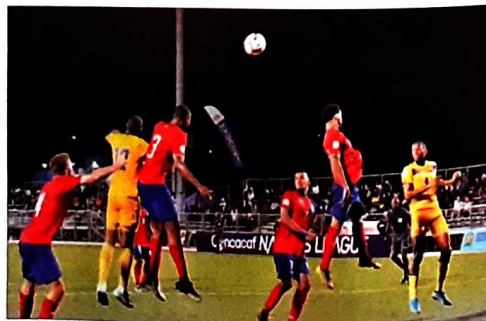
"Unfortunately, we conceded just after 30 minutes, which caused us big problems," he said. "Our game is largely built on our defensive shape and counterattacking. We had to push forward for a goal and the longer the game went on, we were always going to be more susceptible to conceding."

Barbados represented a stern physical challenge for Cayman because 10 of its 11 starting players were over 6-foot-tall, said Pugh. The Cayman players were at a disadvantage both physically and in terms of playing experience, but Pugh said it will be good for them in the long run.

"They deserved to win the game," he said of Barbados. "They've got four or five very, very good players that play at a professional level. At the moment, we don't have any in the squad. I feel like we should; there are a few of our players that can definitely play at a higher level. Hopefully these games have given them the platform for maybe people to see them and see what they can do."

CONCACAF Nations League C, Group A

| TEAM | GAMES | GOAL DIFFERENTIAL | POINTS |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|--------|
| Barbados | 6 | +10 | 12 |
| Cayman Islands | 6 | -1 | 12 |
| Saint Martin | 6 | -1 | 9 |
| US Virgin Islands | 6 | -8 | 3 |



The two teams battle for position in a game Barbados ultimately won 3-0. - Photo: CONCACAF

Abattoir Services this Christmas 2019

CAYMAN ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
working together, growing together

The Department of Agriculture wishes to advise the public who are planning to use its abattoir services this Christmas season that during the month of November they should come to the Department's Reception Desk at the John Bothwell Building in Lower Valley to schedule the appointment(s).
NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.

- The last day for the delivery of livestock for slaughter will be Friday, 20th December 2019.
- The last day of slaughter will be Saturday, 21st December 2019.
- The last day to deliver carcasses/meat is Monday, 23rd December 2019.



Group shot: Team USA came to Cayman on a mission and left on a high note. - Photos: Spencer Fordin

Team USA makes itself home in Cayman

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Foreign country. Familiar result.

Team USA came to Truman Bodden Sports Complex on Tuesday night and delivered a commanding performance in a 4-0 victory over Cuba in the CONCACAF Nations League.

The favourites led literally from the first minute thanks to an early goal from Josh Sargent, and the American Outlaws, filled the stadium with energy and enthusiasm.

"Thank you, Cayman," the group sang late in the second

half as the game came to a close.

The match, held in Cayman due to stadium renovations in Cuba, gave the USA men's national team a victory in Group A and an automatic qualification for the 2021 CONCACAF Gold Cup. That result came after last month's nadir, when USA lost to Team Canada for the first time in 34 years.

That loss led to some introspection for Team USA, but, more importantly, it produced an ultimatum: Win the next two games or allow Canada to come out on top of the group. USA proved up to the challenge, and edged Canada on goal differential to win the group.

"I think it's an important step for the group to deal with pressure and have to respond, to have to come out and win two games and then do it."

Gregg Berhalter, Team USA coach

Morris with a flick-on header, and Morris dribbled into the box and beat the goalie with a right-footed finish.

Morris didn't stop there: just before halftime, he scored from the goalmouth. The play developed off a corner kick, with defender Aaron Long trying to feed it to Morris. But the attempt was blocked, and Long then chipped the ball over the goalie's head to allow Morris an easy finish.

"It was a good performance," said Morris, a forward for the Seattle Sounders in the MLS. "I think starting out as quick as we did was really important. These games are never going to be easy. Sometimes, the circumstances are tough. I thought we had a really good mentality coming out fast."

Sargent scored again late in the second half to give the USA a 4-0 lead, and Cuba could never really get back in the game. Team USA scored 15 goals and allowed just three over the four-game Nations League schedule. Canada, by contrast, scored 10 goals and allowed four.

Cuba, which will be relegated to Nations League B, did not score in any of its matches, while

conceding 18 goals overall.

Long, of the USA side, said he was thrilled with the effort his team had shown on Tuesday night.

"We grew a lot together," he said. "We grew into the style. We learned how to adapt to different games. We learned how to play on the road. There's a lot of things for this group that were a first this year. We took it in stride. We had a lot of ups and a lot of downs but overall we're really happy."

Playing in Cayman was yet another first for many of the players, but Berhalter said the unexpected destination was a positive and an echo of what he's been preaching to his team.

"It's interesting," said Berhalter of playing in Cayman against the Cuban national team. "What we talk about is dealing with whatever happens and dealing with any circumstance. This was just something we had to deal with. Cayman is a beautiful place to visit and we're lucky to be here."

WATCH THE VIDEO ONLINE
CAYMANCOMPASS.COM



Paul Arricla takes a free kick in the first half of Team USA's 4-0 win over Cuba.



Weston McKennie pulled the strings in midfield and assisted on a Jordan Morris goal.



Newcastle defender DeAndre Yedlin was a two-way standout for Team USA.



Jordan Morris scored twice in the first half to lead Team USA to a momentous victory.

Cayman compass

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The chaotic start to the race saw several swimmers trying to find their place in the pack.



World champion comes home first in Pirates Week sea swim

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Hours before the pirates made their landfall, another group was stirring on Cayman's shores.

The 39th annual Pirates Week 5K Swim was held on Saturday, and dozens of swimmers showed up at Governors Beach to test their endurance. Forty-two swimmers hit the water shortly after 7am, and an hour later, a former Olympian was the first to make it to the finish line.

Chad Ho, who finished 10th in the 10K open water swim at the 2016 Olympics, came home first on Saturday in an hour and 24 seconds. Ho, a South African, won the 5K swim at the FINA World Championships in 2015, and he was on Grand Cayman this weekend to visit his sister Andrea.

"This is my first time in the Cayman Islands," said Ho after his first-place swim. "This is an awesome place to come and swim. I thoroughly enjoyed it out there. The weather was nice and warm, crystal clear. A lot of sea life. I'm very happy and it was



Chad Ho happily poses after coming home first.

quite a nice experience to come out and swim it."

More than half the field of competitors were in the 10-19 age bracket, and Jake Bailey, the second-place finisher, came in a little more than five minutes after Ho. The first two female finishers – Jasmine Lambert-Wragg and Elana Sinclair – came in together at 1:07.55 and 1:07.56, respectively.

Marius Acker, who finished



The swimmers line up and are counted off as they hit the water. - Photos: Spencer Fordin

second in the Olympic Distance at last week's Cayman Islands Triathlon, came home 13th overall and first in the 40-59 age group with a time of 1:16.30.

Ana Furzan was the fastest woman in that age group, finishing 21st overall in a time of 1:22.41.

Forty of the 42 competitors managed to finish the distance before two hours had elapsed.

Ho, 29, said that the swim

doubled as a chance to visit family.

"My sister has been working here and living here for two years," he said. "She's been trying to convince me to come out and do a swim. Eventually, she managed to convince me and I'm grateful. It's far to come for a swim, but I've mixed coming in for the swim with a holiday and seeing my sister."

The early-morning serenity of Seven Mile Beach would be interrupted hours later by the Pirates Week celebration, and Ho said he was looking forward to being a part of the event.

"I was out there seeing the fireworks last night," said Ho of the festivities. "We'll definitely go out to see the parade and experience the full island experience. We'll see what else we have to do."



Former world champion Chad Ho touches the finish line after completing his swim.

39TH ANNUAL PIRATES WEEK 5K SEA SWIM

OVERALL

| Rank | Swimmer | Age Group | Gender | Time |
|------|-----------------------|-----------|--------|---------|
| 1 | CHAD HO | 20-39 | M | 1:00.24 |
| 2 | JAKE BAILEY | 10-19 | M | 1:05.42 |
| 3 | JASMINE LAMBERT-WRAGG | 10-19 | F | 1:07.55 |
| 4 | ELANA SINCLAIR | 10-19 | F | 1:07.56 |
| 5 | RAYA EMBURY-BROWN | 10-19 | F | 1:08.46 |
| 6 | JAMES ALLISON | 10-19 | M | 1:11.10 |
| 7 | WILL SELLARS | 10-19 | M | 1:12.24 |
| 8 | BEN SOMERVILLE | 10-19 | M | 1:12.26 |
| 9 | KYRA RABESS | 10-19 | F | 1:12.27 |
| 10 | SAM DAKERS | 10-19 | M | 1:12.46 |

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Harfield repeats as triathlon champ

Patrick Harfield has beaten the field at the Cayman Islands Triathlon three years in a row. - Photos: Taneos Ramsay

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Patrick Harfield has cemented his reputation as the fastest and fittest person on Grand Cayman. Harfield, a personal trainer and triathlon coach, came home in 2:12.12 to win the Olympic distance of the Cayman Islands Triathlon for the third straight year on Sunday. It wasn't a personal best or a course record, but Harfield beat the next closest competitor, Marius Acker, by more than two minutes.

"I love this race. It's the best event on the island, I think, for multi-sport," said Harfield shortly after crossing the finish line. "The conditions today were fantastic. The sea was really calm. Not much of a current or swell. It was lovely out in the water. ...The bike was smooth. Unfortunately, my chain came off once, but I rectified that quickly, got back on and put the hammer down after that."

Dozens of competitors lined up alongside Harfield at Governors Beach before sunrise on Sunday, and the race began just after 6:45am. Many of the competitors were doing the Sprint Triathlon, which meant completing a 750m swim, a 12.4-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run. Harfield and Acker were running the Olympic distance, which was a 1,500m swim, a 24.8-mile bike ride and a 6.2-mile run.

Acker, a previous champion, had planned on running the shorter distance. He changed his mind, however, after seeing that his homeland South Africa had bested England in the Rugby World Cup.

"I knew England was going to win," said Acker of the Rugby World Cup. "Yesterday morning, I called my mom and said, 'England won, right?' She said, 'No.' I said, 'I don't believe you.'"



Swimmers hustled out of the water after the first leg of the triathlon bright and early on Sunday.

"So I speak to my Dad, and he said, 'They won.' I've told everybody if South Africa wins, I'll do the Olympic distance. So yesterday I had to upgrade and do the long one because South Africa screwed me."

Acker was the first out of the water, but Harfield passed him on the bike and never relinquished his lead. The course was different this year, with competitors running from Governors Beach to Public Beach and back. That was a

positive change for Acker, who had been hit by a car on the course four years ago.

Harfield, amazingly, had run an Ironman race just three weeks prior to the Cayman Islands Triathlon, and he said he spent a couple of weeks recovering prior to getting back into competitive mode on Sunday.

"Marius was closing me down on the run, but I knew I had enough distance," he said. "I'm dropping

back down in distance. I haven't done anything short and fast like this, so it's a bit of a shock to the system."

Alyssa Dodson ran the fastest time for women (2:34.15) in the Olympic distance, and Arwen Lawson, a three-time champion, came home in second place. Lawson said Sunday that she's been running the race since 2007 and that she'll continue running it as long as she's in condition to finish.

"It's always hard, partially because I'm getting older," said Lawson of the race. "The competition has stepped up an awful lot. I won it in 2012, 2013 and 2015, I believe. But I'll tell you: Now, it's so much harder. The competition is so much harder, which is good. It makes it a better race."

Different competitors might have different answers as to which part of the triathlon is the most

difficult, but it's an easy answer for Lawson. In her case, she said, it's always the run.

"You're gassed. It's the last leg," she said of the running portion. "You add in the heat and the humidity. I come from the Northeast, where it's about 55 or 60 degrees Fahrenheit. It's very hard to acclimate to this. Our summers can get like this, but then it cools down and I race in summer again."

| SHORT COURSE | | |
|--------------|---------------------|---------|
| Place | Name | Time |
| Men | | |
| 1 | Christian Henning | 1:16.46 |
| 2 | Kevin Connolly | 1:17.48 |
| 3 | Thomas Cowling | 1:19.54 |
| Women | | |
| 1 | Annalet Krueger | 1:21.34 |
| 2 | Alicia Rabess | 1:23.22 |
| 3 | Justine Plenkiewicz | 1:27.25 |

| OLYMPIC DISTANCE | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------|
| Men | | Time |
| 1 | Patrick Harfield | 2:12.12 |
| 2 | Marius Acker | 2:14.23 |
| 3 | Jamie Hughes | 2:15.37 |
| Women | | |
| 1 | Alyssa Dodson | 2:34.15 |
| 2 | Arwen Lawson | 2:43.20 |
| 3 | Sarah Wium | 2:44.03 |



Princeton's squash team has been training at the South Sound Squash Club in preparation for its season. - Photos: Alvaro Serey



Princeton preps for Ivy League in Cayman

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One of the top college squash teams in the US chose Cayman as its training ground this week, leaving behind its concerns about the turning weather and an imposing Ivy League course load.

Princeton, the 2012 national champion, ended last year ranked No. 8 by the College Squash Association and has spent the past few days practicing at the South Sound Squash Club.

Cayman's best players and Princeton's line-up engaged in a 13-match exhibition sequence on Wednesday afternoon, and the visiting squad will return home this weekend to begin its season.

"We have our fall break. The guys don't have classes this week," said assistant coach Moustafa Hamada. "It gives us a good atmosphere and we get out of the bubble a bit. Here, it's amazing. The hot weather and the training conditions, this is really going to help the guys. We're here for the week and we're very excited."

Princeton's squash team has a rich history, dating all the way back to 1930. But Hamada, who played at Trinity College, is part of another incredible legacy. Trinity has won 17 national championships since 1999, enjoying an unbelievable succession of 13 straight titles between 1999 and 2011.

Princeton famously broke that streak in an epic championship run in 2012, when Hamada was a freshman. But Trinity bounced back to win two more titles during Hamada's playing career. Now, he's trying to help mould the

next generation of players, and he said the trip to Cayman allows his team a chance to break out of the monotony of preseason training.

"They're still doing work but they have a nice background," he said on Tuesday. "It's a good bonding week for the team to get closer. Even to us as coaches, we get close with the guys and spend more time with them. We get to know them, especially the freshman and incoming guys. That helps a lot."

Hamada said that the season will begin in earnest once Princeton returns home. Ivy League competition starts in November, and the team will have matches every weekend until mid-December. Then they'll have a reduced schedule and take examinations in January before closing out the year in February.

Princeton is led by sophomore Youssef Ibrahim, who is currently ranked No. 44 by the Professional Squash Association. Hamada pointed to former Princeton player Todd Harrity, currently ranked No. 48 in the world, saying that Ibrahim has a

bright future ahead of him in college and beyond.

"He's a fulltime student. But in breaks, he goes and plays professional tournaments," said Hamada.

"He just got back

from Egypt two days ago and almost beat No. 28 in the world.

He's a sophomore this year and we really have high hopes for him. He could really become a national champion."

Squash has become a year-round sport, said Hamada, and the physical routine changes depending on the time of year. Players work on

conditioning in the summer and switch to speed work as the season draws closer. There's a lot of bike work and a lot of stretching.

"You need pretty much everything," he said. "You have to be flexible. You have to be very physically strong. You have to be mentally strong. It's like chess on legs. ... Squash is very explosive. It's not just, 'You're going to run 10 miles and come back.' That would help, but that's not everything."

Marlene West, a four-time Cayman national champion and manager of the South Sound Squash Club, said many of the local players are thrilled to share the courts with Princeton.

"The guys are really excited," said West. "It's always good to have the college team down because it just brings a little more buzz to the club. It's a great way for the juniors being able to see where squash can take them. It's not just a sport, but you can use it as an avenue for education as well."

West, who won three gold medals at the 2019 Island Games, relishes the opportunity to see such high-calibre opponents up close.

"A lot of them - I think four of them - actually play on the pro circuit," she said. "They obviously balance it very well, being in school and then playing on the pro circuit. But the level of play is significant."

"It's great for our players, because we don't get to travel off island that much."

Assistant coach Moustafa Hamada (left) and sophomore Daelum Mawji take a break from their work.

