



**Pan American Deaf Basketball Championships
Maryland School for the Deaf, Frederick, MD
July 1-6, 2016**

Observations and Anecdotes contributed by Laura Edwards
and Shirley Platt

Welcome to beautiful Frederick, Maryland, home of the esteemed Maryland School for the Deaf, and site of the Fourth PanAmerican Deaf Basketball Championships. Previous PanAm Games were hosted by Venezuela, Cuba and Brazil.

Nice to see many friendly faces, old friends and new amidst a Deaf international sports gathering of North and South Americans, visitors and dignitaries. It's the perfect setting for our Deaf youth to thrive.

This is the first issue of our collaborative effort to bring you news of the games. We floundered around at first, but perservered....so, Enjoy!

July 1, 2016

Opening Ceremonies

WaWa was the highlight of the Opening Ceremonies last night at Maryland School for the Deaf Benson Gym. In addition to his wonderful national anthem performance, he led the fans and athletes to dance with him. Prominent members of the deaf community and sporting world were in attendance to welcome our visitors from all over the world. Warm wishes and messages of welcome were extended by

James E. Tucker, Superintendent , MD School for the Deaf
Randy McClement, Mayor of Frederick
Bobi Cordano, President, Gallaudet University
Rich Postl, Assistant Director of Admissions, NTID
Jack Lamberton, President, USA Deaf Sports Federation
Jeff Salit, Vice President, USA Deaf Sports Federation
Juergen Endress, Secretary General, Deaf International
Basketball Federation (DIBF)

Game One

ARGENTINA 169 BRAZIL 38

A snoozer of a game in which Argentina clearly dominated from the first basket. Brazil gave all they had and then some, but they were clearly out of their league. Schroder was high scorer with 20 points for Brazil, while 10 of Argentina's players had double figures.

Game Two

USA 89 VENEZUELA 65

Pan Am participants, committee members and fans trickled into the gym for the much anticipated match up between Venezuela and the United States squads last night. The last time both teams faced each other was in the semifinals at the 2013 Deaflympics in Bulgaria. Venezuela had pulled off a stunner, beating USA 88-85 in the pivotal fourth quarter, thus knocking off USA to the consolation finals. Tonight, there were 4 USA returnees and 7 Venezuelans from that 2013 Deaflympics game.

1st Half - The starting line-up of Preston Kelly, Robert Haney, Orion Palmer, Raymond Nelson and Josh McGriff did little to break down Venezuela's quick defense early in the game. Josh McGriff, sporting a James Harden look-a-like beard, scored the game's first basket and manned the middle of USA's new 1-3-1 defensive look. However, Venezuela kept up their pesky defensive attack, forcing turnovers on the USA's part. It wasn't the denim blue uniforms that affected USA's transition flow, but the absence of heady point guard Jeremias Valencia (back spasms). Without Valencia to break down the defense, USA struggled to consistently attack Venezuela's full court press.

Venezuela took the lead, 23-22 at 7:22 in the second quarter with a tip-in of their own. Both teams traded leads briefly until USA took the lead back 28-25. Two points by Haney followed a failed dunk by McGriff to make it 30-26.

First half continued to be rifled with steals and turnovers by both teams. Layton Seeber finally sealed the lead at half with a three pointer, followed by a bucket by Raymond Nelson, 45-35.

2nd Half - USA tightened their defense and Venezuela could not buy a basket within 5 feet of the basket McGriff continued to man the middle of the zone and served up two blocks in 3rd quarter. The wall of blue of Gordon, McGriff, Haney, and Seeber allowed Venezuela only 8 points in the 3rd quarter after allowing 35 points in the 1st half.

USA continued to increase their lead, 72-48 at 6:44. A 3 pointer by Trey Gordon brought the score to 75-52 with 5:12 to play. Nelson added two and US led 77-52 with 4:34 to play. It was a no contest after that, as USA powered their way to a 89-65 score.

USA recorded 10 blocks, led by Robert Haney's 4 and Josh McGriff's 3. Raymond Nelson and newcomer Preston Kelly led USA with 17 and 15 points respectively. USA faces Brazil at 3 pm today.