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A Pan Am Swim Bronze Medal For The Bahamas

By Fred Sturup

The Bahamas has been elevated to the bronze medal position in the July Pan American Games, held Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Journal has been informed that the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) recently withdrew medals from a number of athletes following the completion of a final analysis of doping control tests. One of those athletes is Brazilian Rebeca Gusmao who was on the bronze medal team in the 4 X 100 metres (combined styles) relay.

Representing The Bahamas in that event and placing fourth in Rio, were Alana Dillette, Alicia Lightbourne, Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace and Nikia Deveaux. As a result of the disqualification of the Brazilian team due to Gusmao's doping problems, The Bahamas was awarded the bronze medal.

The development is historic for The Bahamas. It's the first medal won by The Bahamas at this level of international swim competition.

The four ladies are the nucleus of the Bahamas Swimming Federation's relay squad that hopes to qualify to compete in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The Bahamas Olympic Association Office expressed 'great pleasure' over the news and extended a public congratulations to the bronze medallists and the BSF.

"This is good news. I'm sure everybody in The Bahamas will be thrilled to hear of this. No doubt, the girls are right there on the bubble. We all hope that they will qualify to compete for us in Beijing. No matter what though, we have very high hopes for the relay programme in the BSF," said Harcourt Rolle, the BOA Office Manager.

PASO, an agent in this region for the International Olympic Committee, has a solid record of fighting the illegal doping in sports.

The analysis completed which resulted in the stripping of medals involved 1,274 doping tests conducted among the 5,633 athletes who competed in Rio. The end factor for PASO saw four athletes being found "to have Adverse Analytical Results which is a very serious breach of the Rules of the Pan Am Games and World Anti-Doping Code."

Stripped along with Gusmao were Libardo Nino Corredor of Colombia, Fabricio Mafra of Brazil and Pedro Wilder Rayo Rojas of Nicaragua.

Here is a statement from the PASO Office:

"PASO was a pioneer in the Americas and in the world for a firm and constant fight against any form of doping in sport. For over 20 years, at each edition of the Pan American Games, tests have been conducted with increased strictness and so has the implementation of disciplinary measures in relation with fraudulent behaviors breaching the principles and values of sport and the Olympic ideal. A zero tolerance policy at the Pan American Games is, and will continue to be the motto that PASO is to go on applying with a firm hand.

"PASO's Medical Commission, implementing fully professionalism and fair processes, guaranteed confidentiality of the process and provided all facilities for the athletes involved to fully exercise their rights of exhibiting the corresponding charges.

"At the closing of the XV Pan American Games, it was announced that until that date, the Games in Rio had been the cleanest in history. Despite the cases mentioned before, the past Games still are those that have produced the lowest number of doping cases, pointing to a positive trend towards a steady reduction of positive doping cases at each edition of the Pan American Games.

"PASO is confident that the cases sanctioned and the measures taken will serve as examples for all members of the Pan American Olympic Family, firmly united to continue striving for the disappearance of this type of fraudulent conducts in sport, that are so harmful to the image and credibility of the athletes and the Olympic ideal.