

Guatemalan Olympics: The Central American and Caribbean Games of 1950

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Throughout the history of the Central American and Caribbean Games, initiated in Mexico in 1926 with the recognition and encouragement of the IOC, only the III and VI Games have been held in Central America proper. For the VI Games in 1950 extensive new sport facilities were built specifically for the event, and the construction of a new stadium, gymnasium, swimming pool, tennis courts, velodrome, baseball park, shooting facility and administration building was a tremendous physical and financial undertaking, unequalled before in Guatemala or perhaps any other Central American republic.

A record 14 countries attended the Games; 13 had been in Barranquilla, Colombia, four years earlier. Of the eligible nations, only Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, neither of which had diplomatic relations with Guatemala at the time, were absent. Guatemala, Mexico and Cuba, the three countries that initiated this oldest multisport festival of the Western Hemisphere, had the largest delegations at the VI Games. Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Guatemala and Panama won the most gold and total medals. Meetings held by delegates resulted in the founding of new regional confederations in several sports and another for sports medicine. The general success of the festival was dampened by disturbances at two soccer games, the first leading to withdrawal of the Costa Rican team and the second, the night of the closing ceremony, seriously threatening continued friendly relations between Guatemala and El Salvador.