

Olympic Aspirations

Yankees help Puerto Rico Olympic Committee celebrate youth, sports and education

By Craig Tapper

On June 14, the National Puerto Rican Day Parade marched down the streets of New York City, but the New York Yankees helped make sure the celebration lasted all weekend long.

In conjunction with the Puerto Rico Olympic Committee, the second annual *Juegos Boricuas* were held at Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx on June 12 and 13. Approximately 100 youngsters, ages 12 through 17, participated in baseball and boxing.

“This is an event that gives an opportunity to our young people that live in New York to show their skills because they can represent Puerto Rico in an international event,” said David Bernier, president of the Puerto Rico Olympic Committee and grand marshal of the parade. “We hope that in two or three years, this will be one of the most important talent detection programs for our Olympic committee.”

Following the competition, the Yankees presented participants with hats and bats, and the top three winning teams from the baseball competition received Yankees tickets.

The New York Yankees Foundation also sponsored 10 students, who were present at the *Juegos Boricuas* ceremony, to receive scholarship funds through the parade’s youth scholarship program. The recipients were also honored dur-



ing an on-field ceremony prior to the Yankees game on June 13. The scholarship winners were invited to watch the game from one of the Stadium’s suites.



RAMIRO PEÑA [6TH FROM L] HELPED THE YANKEES HONOR 10 SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS ON JUNE 13.

The weekend ended with the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, which ran along Fifth Avenue from 44th Street to 86th Street in Manhattan. The aforementioned scholarship winners walked the parade route holding a Yankees banner.

“This is very important for the Yankees being that our home is in the South Bronx, which is one of the largest Puerto Rican population outside of Puerto Rico,” said Manuel García, the Yankees’ director of Latino affairs. “The best way for us to participate is in the scholarship program and in the *Juegos Boricuas* because it brings together two things we prize the most, which are youth and education.” ❧