

# *President of the Cuban Athletics Federation Says He Has High Hopes for Cuban Athletes*

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Santiago de Cuba, November 8 (RHC-Granma)- Notable progress made by Cuba in key disciplines, above all the triple and long jump, will be decisive as the country looks toward the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, according to Alberto Juantorena, President of the Cuban Athletics Federation, speaking in this city.

Also Vice President of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), Juantorena praised the level of young athletes such as Maikel Massó and Juan Miguel Hechevarría, both long jumpers, as well as the more experienced, including discus thrower Denia Caballero and pole vaulter Yarisley Silva.

We have to look after our young athletes and the give them the necessary confidence to achieve Olympic success, the winner of the 400 and 800 meters in the 1976 Montreal Games added.

Meanwhile, the Central American and Caribbean Games in Barranquilla, Colombia, next year, will be a big challenge for the Cuban team, according to Juantorena.

Most countries want to win every event, but it's impossible for one nation to dominate in throwing disciplines as well as sprint and long distance races, jumping events and multi-sport competitions. However, we do have athletes that can help to place Cuba at the top of the country medal chart, and I'm sure that's just what we will do, he stated.

"We are working hard every day, revising training plans, athletes must be in top form, from the qualifying rounds right through to the final," stressed Juantorena.

Meanwhile, the sporting official also noted that although the city has a new gymnasium and two new race tracks, which are soon set to be completed, the most important thing is the technical aspect and the work of coaches.

Likewise, Juantorena highlighted the high costs associated with athletics: for example a single javelin costs about 700 USD, a pole vault 1,500 USD, and accompanying mat 46,000 USD; while the price of the synthetic material used for a six lane race track is about half a million dollars.

Finally, around 30 Cuban athletes have qualified for the 2018 Barranquilla competition, reported the former sprinter, currently touring universities in the east of the island. (ACN)

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