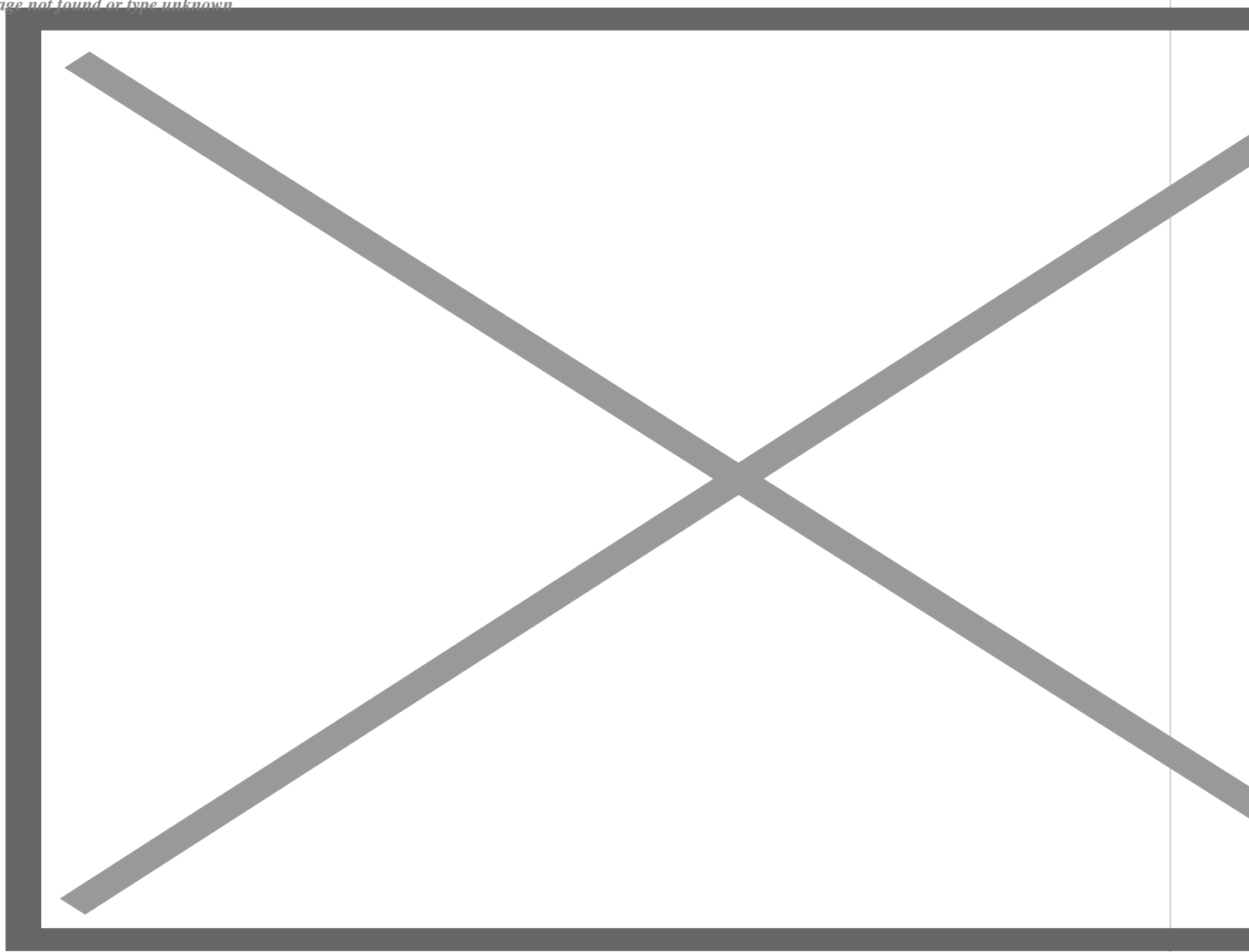


Luis Vega swam close to his 200 butterfly time

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Tokyo, July 26 (RHC)-- Cuban swimming said goodbye today to the Games of the XXXII Olympiad with the eighth places of Elisbet Gámez and Luis Vega in their respective heats of the 200 meters freestyle and butterfly, respectively. It was not in the plans to advance to the semifinals, especially given the tremendous level of the competition, but some window had been left open to try to improve personal times.

That objective could not be achieved either, and so the merit has been to participate again in the greatest universal swimming event, where only the "monsters" manage to make their way to the finals and the medals.

In the crushing Tokyo Aquatic Center, inaugurated at the beginning of 2020, Baracoa stopped the timers in 2:00.56 minutes, below her personal best of 1:58.55. The race was dominated by Australia's Ariarne Titmus with 1:55.88.

The best time of all heats was by American Kathleen Ledecky with 1:55.28. The world limit has been held by Italy's Federica Pellegrini (1:52.98) since 2009, in the polyurethane era, while the Olympic top time belongs to USA's Allison Schmitt (1:53.61) since London 2012. Incidentally, both got wet today in the Tokyo pool and stamped times of 1:57.33 and 1:57.10, in that order.

As for Vega it should be noted that he was close to his limit in the 200 butterfly (1:58.58 minutes), as he stopped the timers in 1:59.00. That performance did not take him off the pace in a competition dominated by Norway's Tomoe Hvas with 1:56.30 minutes.

Hungarian out-of-class Kristof Milak provided the high point of the competition with a 1:53.58 that heralds not only the imminent breaking of the Olympic record held by Michael Phelps (1:52.03, Beijing 2008), but could shake his own world record set at 1:50.73 since July 2019.

Vega appeared in the interview area with calm and good spirits, and thus affirmed that it has been "a pretty good experience. I'm back to participate in an Olympic Games and every time I set myself stronger challenges that I must try to overcome. I think I can continue to improve."

As for the time and that extra that was missing to improve, he commented: "I kept my time, but I would like to have given more. I enjoy growing, not staying in the same place. I'm already under two minutes and it's very difficult to get every second down. But you can work on the technical details and keep improving".

Asked about the responsibility of taking Cuba to such a select stage, the Cuban admitted that "there was a bit of tension, but I always remained concentrated and focused on the event. The level has been very high, with the best swimmers on the planet at the top of their preparation".

Looking to the future, he assured that "the goal is to work for the Central American and Caribbean Games of San Salvador 2023, to beat the times, especially that 1:58.58 in the butterfly, to be able to position myself at world level".

Elisbet also shared with the journalists, but visibly exhausted and sad, because in addition to the injuries she has been suffering from, there were some indispositions prior to the competition, already in this venue.

However, she avoided excuses and affirmed that "I expected more. I felt good, but the time didn't work out. There is no excuse, I was below". Asked about the level of the elimination heats, the Guantánamera commented that "obviously the competition was very tough, but I had hoped to improve my time".

Before saying goodbye, she admitted that she will begin a process of recovery from injuries, so "I hope I can recover and arrive in better conditions to the Central American and Caribbean Games in 2023".

She also apologized to the fans for this presentation, which seems to me simply unnecessary.

Ah... Why the minefield? Well, as the swimming gets hotter and hotter, the interview area becomes an agglomeration in which physical distancing is nothing more than a chimera.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/deportes/265133-luis-vega-swam-close-to-his-200-butterfly-time>



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