

Cuba starts the Badminton Open with five successes



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Santiago's Leodannis Martinez won the men's singles by defeating American Saketh Upadhya 21-13 and 21-14. This Friday he will face a well-known and difficult opponent, Misha Zilberman, from Israel.

His teammate Osleni Guerrero lost to another northern player, Mark Shelley 1-2 (21-12,18-21,13-21).

Of the trio of Cubans in the 32-player draw, Thalia Mengana, from Santiago, won 21-0 and 21-2 in 21 minutes against the host Alexa Méndez. Her opponent in the next phase will be Brazil's Juliana Viana.

Meanwhile, Havana's Marianne Gonzalez lost to Samaya Panwar, from India (13-21, 15-21) and Yeily Ortiz to Disha Gupta, from the United States (9-21, 17-21).

Marianne and Yeily got their revenge in the women's doubles when they defeated Dominicans Alisa and Daniela Acosta with a score of 21-14 and 21-15. In the second round they will face Chile's Ashley Montre and Quilodran Rosa.

Guerrero Osleni, the most experienced Cuban badminton player, achieved his first victory together with Thalia Mengana in mixed by dominating 21-13 and 21-10 the locals Nelson Javier and Lía Lockward, and they will compete against each other.

Juan Acosta and Yarianna Torres, also from Quisqueyano, will be their next opponents in their quest to advance to the quarterfinals.

Leo and Yeily also won against home team William Cabrena and Esteffany Cstillo 21-8 and 21-9, and will face Misha Zilberman and Katsiaryna Zablotskaya this Friday.

In men's doubles Osleni and Leo were bye for the first round, and in the next round they will face the Brazilian brothers Davi Silva and Delvid Silva.

Before leaving for Santo Domingo Leodannis told JIT that he felt good, "since the preparation has been kept as planned by the coaches and the athletes have fulfilled it to the letter, we feel prepared for the event".

"We think we can do the job and we go with the mentality to win as we have always done, and to continue advancing for what is coming, the qualification to the Central American and Caribbean Games, and the Pan American Games, both in 2023," he said.

The young Santiago native pointed out that "after almost three years without competing because of the covid-19, the Santo Domingo Open will be useful to test ourselves and know where we are, although above all we will fight for a result".

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