

Daniela-Idalys duo survives in Pan American Table Tennis Championship



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Havana, November 3 (JIT)-- The duo of Daniela Fonseca and Idalys Lovet remained the only hope of medals for Cuba at the end of the third day of the Santiago de Chile 2022 Pan American Table Tennis Championship.

The Caribbean women defeated this Wednesday the Venezuelan pair of Camila Obando and Mariangel Diaz, with a resounding score of 3-0 sets (11-4, 11-4 and 13-11), to advance to the quarterfinals phase in which they will face the hosts Paulina Vega and Daniele Ortega.

From the Olympic training center in the Chilean capital, the president of the Cuban federation of this sport, Bárbaro Oliva, acknowledged to JIT that this will be a much more demanding duel.

"If I have to give a prognosis I can say that the chances are 50-50. It's a strong couple, but we have a lot of spirit and we will go out for the win," said the also national commissioner.

In the men's doubles competition, Jorge Moises Campos and Livan Martinez lost in five sets (6-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6 and 7-11) to Paraguayans Alejandro Toranzos and Marcelo Aguirre, and said goodbye to a possible medal.

There will be no possibility of prizes in the mixed doubles event either, after Idalys and Liván fell 0-3 (10-12, 5-11 and 3-11) in their match against the northern team Amy Wang and Nikhil Kumar. The same fate befell Daniela and Moises, who could not stop the push of locals Paulina Vega and Nicolas Burgos in the round of 16.

Perhaps for Daniela and Moises, Cuba's representatives to Tokyo 2020, the result should have been better. They easily defeated Costa Rica's Lucia Zavaleta and Alejandro Montoya 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-2) in the round of 16, and it was presumed that they could advance at least to the semifinals.

"That doubles could not "mesh" well. Due to problems that arose, they prepared in different scenarios and could not rehearse as much as we would have liked", explained Oliva, without ignoring that the host duo played accurately.

Cuba was also unable to take the lead in the team competition, dominated by the Brazilian teams in each gender. Now the individual tournaments are about to begin, with elimination rounds starting this Thursday.

A handicap for the Cubans has been the uncomfortable location in the elimination rounds. These are organized by ranking positions and our players have barely been able to score points in international competitions.

"The draw hits us. Of course it's not the same as facing the strongest teams from the first matches," admitted the manager, who also mentioned the quality of several rivals.

The Brazilian, American and Puerto Rican champions, plus individuals from Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay and Canada, add prestige to a tournament that serves as a qualifier for the Santiago 2023 Pan American Games.

Brazil has Hugo Calderano (sixth in the world ranking) and Bruna Takahashi (23); Puerto Rico has Adriana Diaz (12) and Brian Afanador (69); and for the United States Kanak Jha (28) and Lily Zhang (36) shine.

"We have to play more, continue to strengthen our system. We have already thought of strategies in that sense," said Oliva, a former table tennis player.

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