

Successful return of Marabana on Sunday morning

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By Orlando González

Havana, November 20 (RHC)-- Marabana 2022 was held this Sunday morning, after two years of absence in the on-site modality. The event was attended by more than 2,000 national runners, while foreigners exceeded 600, with 51 nationalities present. The main running race in the largest of the Antilles started at 6:30 a.m., with a new circuit in its 36th edition, starting and finishing at Independencia Avenue, between Salvador Allende and 19 de Mayo (in front of the Ramón Fonst multi-purpose hall).

The multicolored peloton had all the logistic and sanitary support during its route and in its postcards it left picturesque and exotic moments, besides stories of human overcoming and fraternity really admirable. Beyond the purely competitive aspect, we could appreciate a true celebration of the people: couples who decided to run together and crowned the finish line with a kiss, elderly athletes finishing their run, people with disabilities giving the world a true example of perseverance and resilience, leaving on the way an accumulation of kilometers to achieve their goal, runners entering as a block with their flag, others with their children and pets and, the most daring, with typical costumes, and even a lady dressed as a bride running the marathon in that very attire.

After the competition concluded, Carlos Gattorno, president of Cuba's National Commission of Races and Walks (CNCC), in exclusive statements to Radio Habana Cuba (RHC), said: "it was an aspiration of all Cuban walkers to return to the streets", referring to the two years of absence of the race in the on-site modality. "It has been hard work to ensure everything we are seeing, and that the vast majority of runners feel satisfied for having participated. It is a great triumph, not only for our sports movement, but also for Cuban health. Everyone who is here is confident that they are talking to a properly vaccinated person, they know that they are in a capital city with a population that has one of the first places in the world with full immunization; therefore, the success is of a system that favors sports, health and education. To have more than 600 foreign runners from 51 countries in these times... I think it is not necessary to say much more".

The executive added that the new Marabana circuit already has all the documents that guarantee its homologation, as required by World Athletics and the World Association of Marathons and Distance Races.

Gattorno said that the 2023 version of Marabana will be in honor of the brother country of Mexico: "it will be dedicated for the first time to a country, and that first time, by consensus, it was decided that it would be for Mexico as a country and for the Mexican runners, who have always been present in Marabana with us," he concluded.

For his part, the brand-new champion of the men's marathon, Yuleidys La O, told us: "I am grateful for this Marabana, since I had not come to Havana for almost three years and without competing because of an injury for which I had to stop for almost eight months. I focused with my new coach in making a preparation outside my municipality, with whom I am very grateful because he was aware of everything. I thank God and all the people who had to do with this result".

About his prospects for the next season he added: "now I will recover from my injury; then we will continue the preparation in December with a view to the qualifiers for the Centromerican Games, to be held in El Salvador in the coming month of February. I will give my best to reach the qualifying mark."

Meanwhile, the queen of the women's marathon, Lisandra Gomez, was very happy in her dialogue with RHC for the double victory of the eastern province of Holguin, where she is from, as well as La O: "we are very happy as a province. My partner La O also won in the men's, so congratulations to him as well".

"In my case it was a very difficult victory, since from kilometer 16 I was alone. I thank the referees, the judges, my coach, all the people who supported me, my teammates that thanks to all of them I was able to achieve this result," said the champion.

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