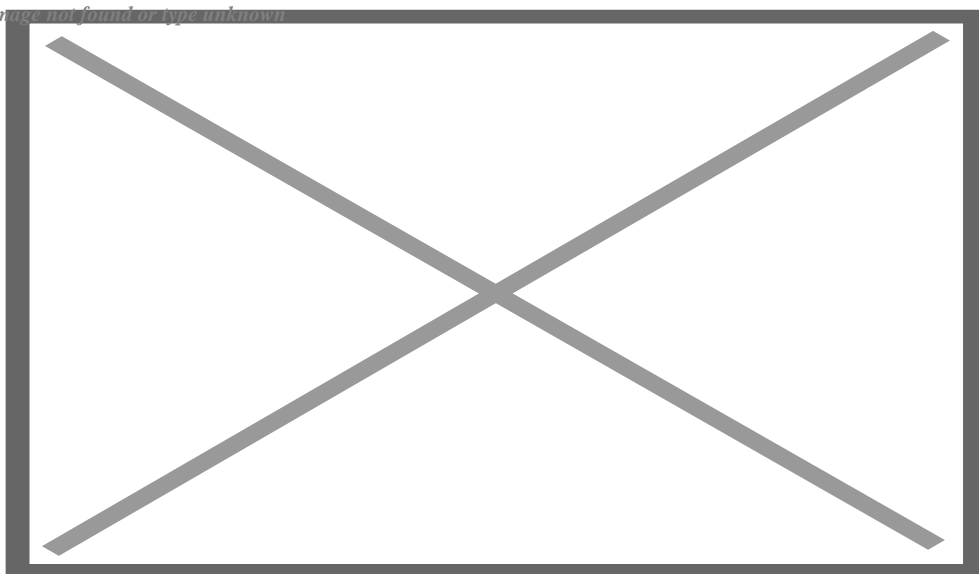


Cuban boxing astros lose medals at Tashkent World Championships

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Saidel Horta

Havana, May 10 (RHC) - Cuban boxing has not had a good day so far this Wednesday in the quarterfinals of the World Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with only one win and four losses, although there are still seven fighters left to step into the ring.

Three of the failures were for Julio Cesar La Cruz, Arlen Lopez and Lazaro Alvarez, so Rolando Acebal's squad will have to rely on young blood to try to surpass its performance in the previous world championship, when it won three titles.

Only the 21-year-old debutant Saidel Horta (57 kg), who gave a great demonstration of courage and willpower in his fight with the Kazakh subtitle of the previous edition Serik Termizhanov, managed to win and secure bronze in Wednesday's long day.

Horta (21 years old) made a luxurious exhibition based on an effective and varied punching and an impressive speed of legs to win the vote of the five judges, most of them with a bulky score of 30-25 and 30-26.

However, the other four Cubans who have performed so far were outclassed, including La Cruz (92 kg), who was seeking his sixth world title.

La Cruz (92 kg) fell 4-1 to Uzbekistan's Lazizbek Mullojonov, in controversial Thursday voting.

From the first round four of the five judges voted for the Uzbek, something similar happened in the second, and although in the third round they leaned towards the Cuban two-time Olympic champion for his bigger punch, it was not enough to reach the triumph.

"Boxing still has its debts in terms of the work of the judges," criticized sports narrator Luis Izquierdo, who covers the world championship in Taskent for Cuban radio.

Although he acknowledged that La Cruz did not show his usual speed, he made it clear that he landed the best punches and deserved the victory.

In another unexpected outcome, three-time world champion Lazaro Alvarez (63.5 kg) lost 1-4 to Mongolian Chinzorig Baatarsukh, while two-time Olympic champion Arlen Lopez was defeated 4-3 by Chinese Tanglatihan in the 80 kg, in a fight where the Cuban ended up exhausted.

Young debutant Jorge Cuellar (71 kg) was also unable to win, losing to Indian Nishan

Cuba took 12 of its 13 boxers to the medal contention, one more than the host Uzbekistan. Russia took eight and Kazakhstan seven. There are seven Cubans left to fight on Wednesday's date.

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