

Young blood shows up for Cuban boxing at the world championship in Tashkent



Cuban Erislandy Alvarez

Havana, May 10 (RHC) - Cuban boxing achieved six victories but suffered an equal number of defeats on Wednesday in the quarterfinals of the World Championship of that sport in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Supported mainly by its young blood, the Cuban squad secured six bronze medals with the possibility of turning them into silver or gold, but experienced unexpected moments with the elimination of its three two-time Olympic champions -Julio César la Cruz, Roniel Iglesias and Arlen López- and of its three-time world champion Lázaro Alvarez.

But debutants Saidel Horta (57 kg), Alejandro Claro (48), Erislandy Alvarez (60) and Fernando Arzola (+92), as well as world champions Yosvany Veitía (54) and Yoennis Feliciano Hernández (75), gave outstanding performances.

Horta and Erislandy gave excellent demonstrations and confirmed themselves as great talents of the so-called "Flagship" of Cuban sport.

In a fight he dominated from start to finish, Horta (21 years old) wasted speed on the ring and showed an accurate punching against Kazakh world subtitle Serik Termizhanov, to take the vote 5-0, while the impetuous Erislandy Alvarez (60 kg) gave two protection counts to Andrew Chilata (Zambia) and also deserved the ruling of the five judges, one of them even by a wide vote of 30-24.

However, in a controversial fight La Cruz (92 kg), who was seeking his sixth world title, was declared the loser against a host fighter.

The captain of the Domadores de Cuba lost 4-1 to Uzbekistan's Lazizbek Mullojonov, in a fight where he received more than usual, but many experts saw him winning by a narrow margin.

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

Although he acknowledged that La Cruz did not show up with the usual speed, he considered that he threw the best punches and deserved the victory.

In other unexpected results, three-time world champion Lazaro Alvarez (63.5 kg) lost 1-4 to Mongolian Chinzorig Baatarsukh, two-time Olympic champion Arlen Lopez was defeated 4-3 by Chinese Tanglatihan in the 80 kg, and Roniel Iglesias succumbed to Uzbekistan's Muydinkhujaev in a very even fight that was voted in a split decision.

Cuba, which took 12 of its 13 boxers to the medal contention, will have six fighters for the semifinals, scheduled for Friday.

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