

Jumpers for Cuba's first gold medal in athletics in San Salvador



Photo: Calixto N. Llanes

Havana, July 4 (RHC) - After a day without titles, although with four medals, Cuban athletics will be looking for its first crown this Tuesday at the Centrocaribes de San Salvador-2023. The biggest options appear in the jumps with Maykel Massó or Alejandro Parada.

Massó, Olympic bronze medalist at Tokyo-2020, and Parada, an 18-year-old talent who already won the U-20 world subtitle last year in Cali, are two of the great candidates for the crown in the long jump final.

Only three of the eight entries have season records above 8.00m, led by Massó (8.36). Parada has reached 8.15 and Jamaican Turner 8.13.

If he performs at his best, Massó (24 years old) is the great aspirant to climb to the top of the podium, but we will have to see if Daniel Osorio's pupil has fully recovered from an injury he suffered in the European tour and even made him give up luxury competitions. In any case, the Santiago native is a boy of proven courage and will go out to give his all at the Jorge "El Mágico" González Stadium.

Parada has had a good breakthrough in the campaign - around 10 competitions - and has been successfully inserted in European and Asian competitions.

In the other finals with Cuban athletes, the title options are more difficult.

The world champion with the 4x400 relay in Silesia-2021, Zurian Hechavarría, looked good in her first competition of a certain level after an absence due to injury and has awakened illusion among specialists.

In the semifinals she achieved her best result of the season (55.74 sec), in a final where the great favorite is the Panamanian Olympic and world finalist Gianna Woodruff (54.46).

Another Cuban, Darielys Sentelle, will be looking for further progress (57.91 in the semis).

In the decathlon, Cuban decathlete Yancarlos Hernández is fighting for a medal - he is in third place with three events to go -, Yoao Illas will give his best in a difficult final of the 400 hurdles, as will Marianailys Silva (javelin).

The remaining Cubans who will compete on Tuesday will do so in the semifinals: Rose Almanza and Sahily Diago (800m), Greysis Roble and Keili Pérez (100m hurdles), Yovany Canuet (110m hurdles).

In the morning session, neither Leonardo Castillo nor the reappeared Yoandys Lescay, the latter apparently injured in one of his legs after a remarkable effort on Monday in the mixed relay, were able to reach the 400m final.

Monday's day left lights and shadows for Cuban athletics, which won four medals, but could not climb to the top of the podium in "El Mágico" González.

The most plausible was in charge of the triple jumper Leyanis Perez (21 years old), winner of the subtitle in the long jump with the best result of her life (6.65m), in an event won with an impressive record of 6.86m by the 20-year-old Colombian Natalia Linares.

Yunisleydy de la Caridad García also won the bronze medal in the 100m, a specialty in which the island had not reached the podium for 25 years. Garcia, recent national record holder (11.08sec), clocked 11.50sec, in a final with an annoying headwind won by the favorite Julien Alfred (St. Lucia), 11.14.

The Pan American high jump champion, Luis Zayas, finished with the same height as Puerto Rican Luis Castro (2.25m) in a competition that he dominated until the last jumps, but lost the gold for having failed in more attempts than the Puerto Rican.

Another subtitle was achieved by the mixed 4x400 quartet formed by Leonardo Castillo, Roxana Gómez, Yoandrys Lescay and Lisneidis Veitía, with 3.16.97, behind the Dominican Republic's Olympic and world medalist luxury relay.

Despite not fielding their star athlete Marileidy Paulino, the Quisqueya team reigned with Olympians Alexander Ogando, Fiordeliza Coffil and Lidio Feliz, as well as Anabel Medina.



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