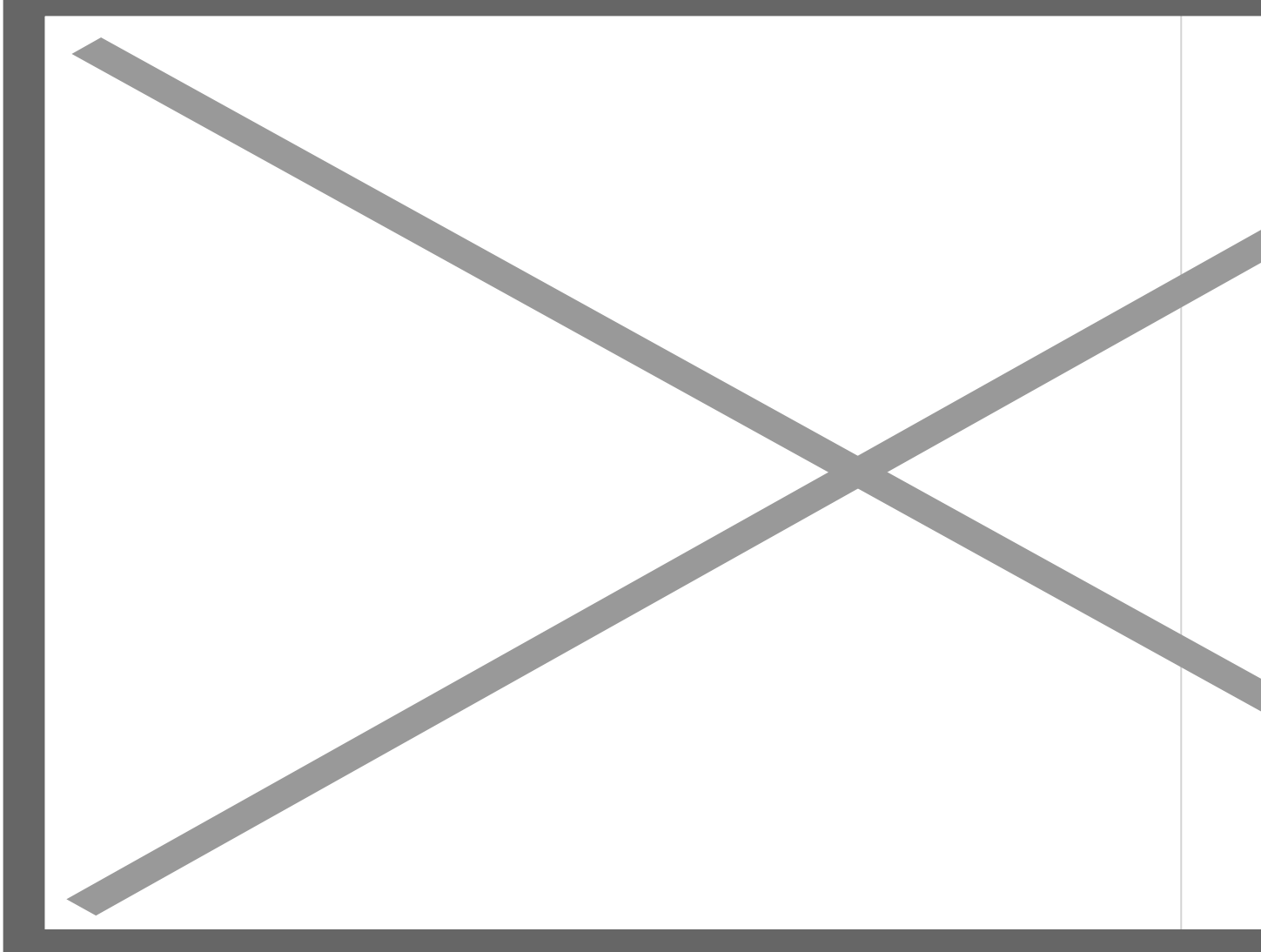


Thirty years of an impassable flight: Sotomayor still on the throne

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Sotomayor in Limonar

Havana, July 26 (RHC) - Imagine a human being jumping over a soccer goal. Nothing less than that astronomical height was reached three decades ago in Salamanca by Javier Sotomayor. His leap of 2.45 meters has become historic and, for the moment, seems to be an unsurpassable world record.

This July 27th marks the 30th anniversary of the greatest high jump in the history of the Spanish city, compared by many in 1993 to a flight over a soccer gate, 2.44m above the ground.

Revering the author of one of the events that shook the world of sport in the nineties, the celebrations "rain" these days for the Prince of Heights.

The first celebration for the anniversary took place last week on the island, when 15 bartenders from Havana and Varadero gathered in a mini-competition and gave life to the "2.45 cocktail", a tribute to the best high jumper in history.

Then the celebration moved to his native Limonar (Matanzas), where Sotomayor shared with future champions and glories of the sport of his homeland, including his childhood friend and also Olympic high jumper Marino Drake.

"I am very happy for the 30 years of my record. I know that someday someone will break it, although today I don't see it as threatened as in 2013 and 2014, when Barshim and Bondarenko rocked it several times," Sotomayor said in statements to Radio Habana Cuba (www.radiohc.cu).

"At the moment I'm still enjoying and proud, and I'm grateful for all the acknowledgments and tokens of affection," said "el Soto," who is now busy passing on his knowledge to one of his five sons, Jaxier, U-16 Spanish champion.

The Salsa Mayor group will entertain during the next night-morning at the popular Bar 2.45, located in the Havana neighborhood of Miramar, where the champion will be honored by several friends, while on Thursday the Spanish Embassy in Havana will pay tribute to him with an activity in which anyone who wishes may be photographed with the star at the foot of an image created by the designer Raupa, which recalls the historic jump.

Aged 55, Soto is considered one of the greatest Cuban sportsmen in history. In addition to five world championships, his record includes the Olympic gold medal in Barcelona-92, six world crowns, three in the Pan American Games, and he is the only jumper to have jumped over the 2.40m barrier more than 20 times.

Among his most distinguished distinctions are the Prince of Asturias Award for Sports, the IOC's "Sports Inspiration for Youth" award and his exaltation to the Hall of Fame of the Central American and Caribbean Athletics Confederation.

In addition to coaching her son, Sotomayor is currently a member of the Cuban Athletics Federation.

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