

World Athletics awards Alberto Juantorena



Photo: Roberto Morejon (JIT)

Havana, August 18 (JIT) --Two-time Olympic champion Alberto Juantorena was named today as Honorary Member of the World Athletics (WA) Council and was conferred the WA Gold Order of Merit, the highest distinction awarded by that organization. The announcement was made by its president, British Sebastian Coe, at the closing of the WA Congress held in this city prior to the XIX World Athletics Championships 2023.

Coe praised the trajectory of the 400 and 800 meters champion in the Montreal 1976 Olympic Games, as well as his leadership outside the track to promote the development of athletics in the world.

In addition to being the head of the Cuban Athletics Federation, Juantorena held one of the vice-presidencies of Inder for 28 years. At the international level he was a member of the WA World Council from 1987 to this year, and served with recognized success as vice president between 2015 and 2019.

"We will seek the opportunity for him to receive these awards in the best possible circumstances," Coe assured, after also highlighting his performance as vice president of the Cuban Olympic Committee (COC) and leader of the Cuban Paralympic Committee.

Endowed with an exceptional charisma, a talkative man and defender of athletics in any space, Alberto was part of different commissions within the IAAF and WA, and worked for the development of new generations.

Similar recognition was given to another great star of athletics, the former pole vaulter Sergey Bubka. Olympic champion in Seoul 1988, the Ukrainian athlete broke the world record 35 times and was crowned in six consecutive world championships, starting in Helsinki 1983.

After his retirement, he served as vice-president of athletics' highest governing body from 2007 to 2023, a position he will continue to hold in an honorary capacity.

Participants at the congress, held at the Hungexpo exhibition center, also gave a standing ovation to Colombian Ximena Restrepo, who received the WA Merit Badge, a few hours after being ratified as vice-president of the organization.

Some sources consulted by JIT agree that she could become Coe's successor, which would make her the first woman to lead the destiny of athletics at world level.

In addition to the election process that ratified the British athlete for a third and last term, the conclave left a group of modifications in issues related to the disciplinary and appeals tribunal; it welcomed the accountability on the use of the budget in 2022 and made official the venues and dates of upcoming events in the world, among other issues.

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