

# *Cuba has motivation and commitment towards the Santiago 2023 Games*

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Havana, October 4 (JIT) - Two weeks away from the start of the XIX Pan American Games of Santiago 2023, sports authorities assured that motivation and commitment will be the answer to the support given by the country's leadership to the preparation of the Cuban delegation.

During his appearance on the radio program Mesa Redonda, the general director of high performance of Inder, José Antonio Miranda Carreras, commented on details related to the sports embassy that will face one of the most demanding competitions in recent years.

"It is a very important challenge in a season in which we had to conceive a preparation with several fundamental events with little time between one and another. It also coincided with qualifying competitions, world championships and the XXIV Central American and Caribbean Games of San

Salvador 2023," said the director.

The calendar of the Chilean event has 425 events, six more than in Lima 2019, as the number of mixed events has increased. A total of 18 sports will offer direct qualification to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, while 11 others will contribute to the rankings that will define quotas for that event.

"The date is not usual, but it is summer in Chile, something that brings some difficulties, especially because the club seasons begin, a circumstance that affects Cuba and the rest of the countries," Miranda pointed out.

So far, Cuba has 362 qualified athletes, a figure that could grow when the athletics registration is completed. That total does not include the 14 contestants in the e-sports festival to be held in parallel, but with no impact on the official medal tally.

"We can assure that we are facing a multiplied effort of our athletes and coaches. The medals are obtained in the competition scenario, but they are forged from the preparation with innovation and science, despite limitations of all kinds," Miranda illustrated.

Regarding the goals, he ratified the estimate of between 18 and 22 gold medals, based on the analysis influenced by the renovation process undertaken in several disciplines. A group of 227 athletes will be for the first time in the Pan American Games and many of them will have to assume a great protagonism.

"A total of 109 athletes left to be with us in 2022, another 78 in 2023. More than thirty of them had commitments with the result we were planning," assured the Inder executive.

As fundamental objectives, he mentioned the fulfillment of the purpose that emerged from deep studies, as well as keeping the follow-up of key figures and achieving the greatest possible number of places for Paris 2024.

He said that the main medal options are in wrestling, athletics and canoeing, with actions during the closing of the calendar. He acknowledged that boxing may balance the harvest during the first week.

In the program, several figures of athletics ratified the desire to contribute the maximum to the objectives set; the work deployed by the Cuban Sports Research Center was explained; and boxer Julio César La Cruz and judoka Idalys Ortiz exposed the pride for the designation as flag bearers of the delegation.

"More challenges, more commitment was the motto with which we competed in San Salvador 2023. That spirit will also be present in the Pan American Games", ratified Miranda.

## BOXERS AND WRESTLERS, MAINSTAYS OF THE DELEGATION

The contribution of boxing and wrestling will be decisive to achieve the objectives of the delegation, acknowledged the main federations of these sports.

Alberto Puig de la Barca took the opportunity to announce the seven men and three women boxers. He valued the renewal in the ranks of the so-called Flagship of Cuban Sport and pondered a preparation that included profitable bases in France and Pinar del Rio.

"Women's boxing started just this year. The girls train hard, but they are a little inhibited in competition. The sparring in France allowed them to gain confidence. Knowing that they can win in the fights is very important for them," confirmed Puig de la Barca.

Competitiveness in the sport of fists will increase in Santiago de Chile, as it will distribute Olympic tickets, hence each country has been able to present a competitor in each division.

"The United States will bring a very good team, as will Canada, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Mexico, some of those countries with Cuban coaches or advisors. We have to win without leaving any doubt, so as not to give room for erroneous refereeing decisions. The men's team is very well prepared and anyone can get to the center of the podium. In the women's team we depend a lot on the draw. In all cases there is a high spirit of patriotism and a strong desire to win," he acknowledged.

Martín Torres Peguero made a similar statement, based on the exciting moments experienced in the recent universal wrestling competition held in Belgrade, from which they returned with two gold medals, one bronze medal and four Olympic tickets.

"We want to make the greatest contribution to the delegation," he said after explaining that the collective reigns in high spirits in all the teams (free, Greco-Roman and women's).

He praised the commitment shown from the Central Caribbean event in San Salvador to the world competition in Serbia, where Luis Orta and Gabriel Rosillo climbed to the top of the podium, Oscar Pino finished in third place and Milaymis Marín added a fifth place.

Torres Peguero confirmed that multi-champion Mijaín López will accompany the Cuban wrestlers during their presentations in Santiago de Chile. "Mijaín will always be the best source of inspiration," he proudly acknowledged.

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