

Andy Pereira to reach unprecedented table tennis final for Cuba

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Havana, November 1 (JIT) -- Andy Pereira can boast a special place among the best Cuban tennis players, because until today none had managed to dispute the final that awaits him in the XIX Pan American Games.

The feat was experienced at the Olympic Training Center, where the continental champion in the men's doubles, along with Jorge Moises Campos, arrived ready to shatter the forecasts that favored the Canadian Eugene Wang.

Victories in the three previous duels, including the one in Lima 2019, underpinned the northern player's options. However, Andy mentally overturned those numbers, put every ball in the right place, got the tactics right to "move" his opponent and every decision did a lot of damage.

"I came out determined, I believed it and managed to open him up to his forehand and that worked out very well. I moved the angles to make it more difficult for him to defend," he explained calmly, as if it were not an unprecedented performance.

Only one detail gave him away. In his eyes was the gleam of emotion, the one with which he was contained during the four sets, released once the goal was achieved.

Andy won the first three sets with slates of 11-8, 11-5 and 11-9. Then he gave up 7-11 and with that the ghosts of the Peruvian capital began to flutter, when Wang managed to come back from a similar advantage.

To top off the uncertainty, the Canadian put a three-point difference at the end of the fifth set. It was the Cuban's most sublime moment, he resurfaced the image of his best moments, erasing both the distance before achieving the tie at 10. Wang found no answers to stop him and capitulated 10-12.

"This is a dream and in the final we can go on," he declared before saluting his teammates. He also had to multiply to answer the calls of those who always follow him, without distinguishing good or bad moments.

On Wednesday night, we will know how far he will go. On the other side of the net he will have the fourth man in the world ranking and monarch since the Toronto 2015 edition, the Brazilian Hugo Calderano, with wounded pride after the defeat in the doubles final, but as Andy says, anything can happen.

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