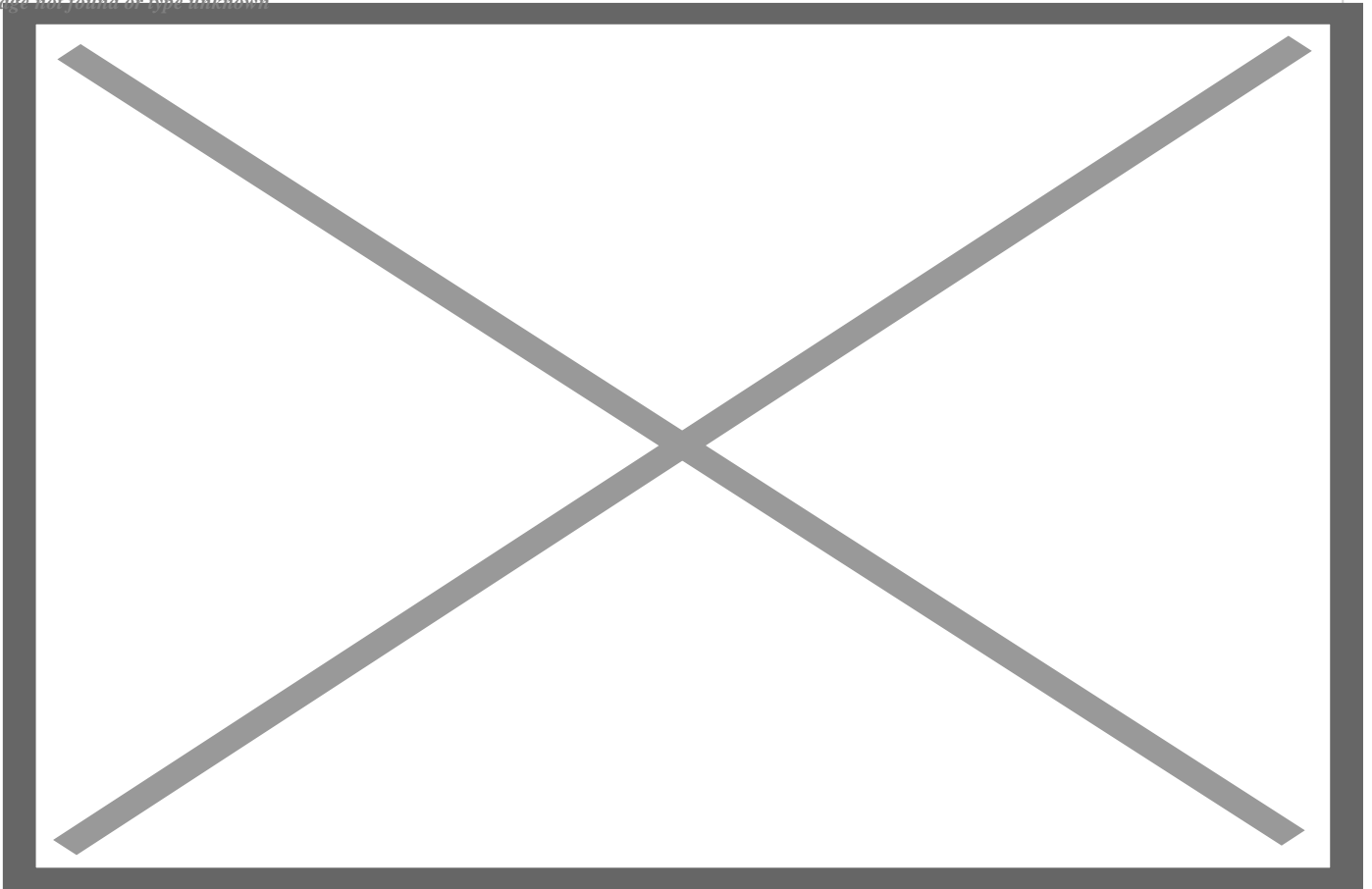


Javier Sotomayor wins the Panam Sports Legends Award

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Havana, December 10 (ACN) -- Cuban Javier Sotomayor, world record holder in the high jump in athletics, won the Panam Sports Legends Award on Saturday at a gala held in the U.S. city of Miami.

Olympic champion in Barcelona 1992, silver medalist in Sydney 2000 and four-time world champion, Sotomayor was awarded by Neven Illic, president of the governing organization of sports in America.

Known worldwide as the Prince of the Heights, the outstanding former athlete expressed his gratitude to all the people who influenced his sports career.

He mentioned his mother and father, grandparents, coaches, friends, wife and children, who are an inspiration to him and always motivated him to keep going, he said.

Along with the high jump legend, shared the candidacy in this category were swimmers Mark Spitz (United States) and Thiago Pereira (Brazil), and Dominican hurdler Félix Sánchez, all of them with sufficient endorsement at Olympic and universal level.

In the case of Sotomayor, he remains the man who has jumped over 2.40 meters (m) the most times in his event, in which he set a world record of 2.45 m in Salamanca, Spain, in 1993, a primacy that is still in force.

Admired and respected in his country and in the international arena, the former jumper attended as a guest at the recent XIX Pan American Games in Santiago de Chile, which concluded last November.

There, the champion in the editions of Indianapolis 1987, Havana 1991 and Mar del Plata 1995 shared with former athletes such as the Ukrainian Serguei Bubka, the American Carl Lewis and the Dominican Sánchez himself, especially during the track and field events.

The Panam Sports awards ceremony recognized the winners in 11 categories, based on a voting process that was open to fans until December 5.

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