

Orta and Rosillo's wrestling marks sports year in Cuba

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Havana, December 26 (RHC)-- Cuban sports bid farewell to 2023 with world medals in four sports, including its new driving force, wrestling, and achieved a commendable fifth place in the Pan American Games in Santiago de Chile.

Led by champions Luis Orta (67 kg) and Gabriel Rosillo (97 kg), Cuba reigned in the Greco style at the Belgrade World Wrestling Championships, with three medals (2-0-1) and signed four Olympic tickets for Paris-2024.

To the titles of Orta and Rosillo, the island added the bronze of Oscar Pino (130, Greco style) and Milaymis Marín (fifth in the women's 76), booty that gave it an honorable eighth place in the medal standings.

Orta, Olympic champion in Tokyo-2020, deserved the distinctions of Best Wrestler of the World in his style, according to the International Federation (UWW) and Athlete of the Year in Cuba. The Havana native rounded off the year with titles at the Pan American Games in Chile and the Centrocarriles in San Salvador.

Gabriel Rosillo

Rosillo also had an impeccable year and his world crown reached the category of a feat. In Belgrade, the Santiago native arrived after overcoming injuries and surgery, and on his way to the gold medal he knocked down several favorites and in the final the Olympic and four-time world champion Artur Alexanian (Armenia), with a spectacular comeback. UWW honored him with one of the Revelation of the Year awards.

Boxing (1-3-2), canoeing (1-0-0) and athletics (0-1-2) are the other sports that won medals during the year at world championships.

Yarisleidis Cirilo

Yarisleidis Cirilo became in Duisburg (Germany) the first Cuban woman to win an individual world title in canoeing, when she triumphed in the C1 200m. The 21-year-old Guantanamera had won the first women's gold in that sport a year earlier in the C2 500m. Cirilo, who also shone in the Pan American Games in Santiago, was selected as the best female athlete of 2023 by the International Association of Sports Press in America (AIPS America) and for the second consecutive year she was elected the Athlete of the Year in Cuba. Athletics had in the triathletes Lazaro Martinez (world silver medal), and Leyanis Perez and Cristian Napoles (both bronze medals) its most outstanding figures, while in the world boxing championship in Tashkent, Cuba reached six podiums, although its performance was discreet with only one scepter, by Yoennis Feliciano.

At the close of 2023, Cuban sport has already qualified for the Parisian competition in eight sports: athletics (6), wrestling (4), boxing (3), canoeing (2), table tennis (1, two athletes), shooting (1), pentathlon (1) and cycling (1).

With 69 medals, 30 of them gold, the Cuban delegation finished in fifth place in the medal standings at the Pan American Games Santiago 2023, improving its sixth place from Lima-2019.

It now escorted the United States (winner with 124 gold medals), Brazil (66), Mexico (52) and Canada (46), and overtook Colombia, which won one less title (29 to 30), for fifth place in a close battle.

As usual, combat sports led the Cuban harvest, with wrestling (8 golds) and judo (6) standing out, while athletics was the other main protagonist (7).

Boxing fell far short of expectations, with only two crowns.

Table tennis won the same number of gold medals, although in this case with an outstanding score due to its unexpected gold medals in doubles (mixed and men's), while canoeing climbed to the top of the podium with its Olympians Cirilo and José Ramón Pelier.

The remaining crowns were in weightlifting, rowing and shooting, the latter with the illustrious gunman Leuris Pupo, winner for the third time in continental competitions.



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