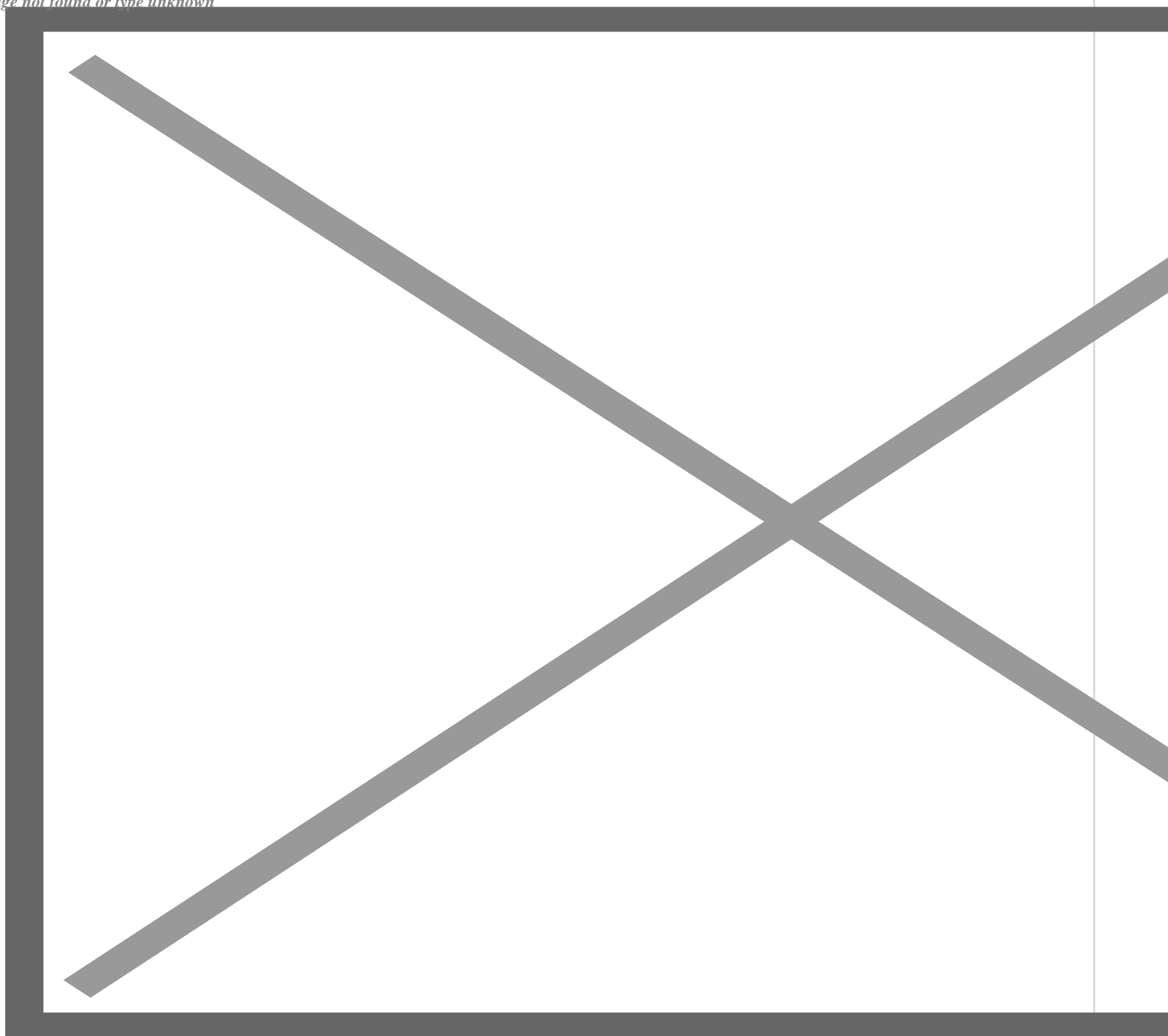


Ivan Silva leads Cuba at Baku Judo Grand Slam

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Havana, February 19 (JIT) - World runner-up Ivan Silva (90 kg) on Sunday produced the best performance by a Cuban at the Baku 2024 Judo Grand Slam, finishing fifth and leading his delegation in the overall standings.

He started with a closer than expected fight against the young representative of Turkmenistan, Mamedaly Achyldyyev, just up from 81 kg, but managed to beat him by hansoku-make in golden rule, at the height of the second round, in which he began his performance.

In the third round, he took out Germany's Martin Matijass on the tatami, who was beaten by waza-ari and then ippon in just three minutes of sparring.

In the quarter-finals he also showed superiority over local Vulgar Talibov, world youth runner-up and champion of the Buenos Aires 2018 Youth Olympic Games, whom he beat by ippon in just over a minute of combat.

In the semi-finals he lost by hansoku-make to Azerbaijan's Murad Fatiyev, the eventual champion of the division, and had to settle for a bronze medal.

In the battle for the bronze medal, he was widely outclassed by the experienced Bulgarian Ivaylo Ivanov, who was able to score first waza-ari and then ippon, so he was in fifth place.

Idalys Ortiz (+78 kg) made her debut against the local Nigar Suleymanova. She only needed 20 seconds to give her an ippon that was firstly decreed waza-ari and then rectified by video refereeing. In the second round, she was unable to defeat Serbia's Milica Zabic on golden rule.

She had been trailing two shidos since the second minute of the bout and 26 seconds into the second round the judge considered that both were passive and that meant the third penalty and the hansoku-make for Ortiz, who was out of the competition. The division was won by the French world champion Romane Dicko, the leader of the ranking.

In other divisions, Dutch Guusje Steenhuis (78 kg), Georgian Ilia Sulamanidze (100 kg) and Russian Valeriy Endovitskiy (+100 kg) won. Azerbaijan won the tournament with three gold medals, followed by France, Canada, Netherlands, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Spain, Austria, Croatia and Sweden, all with one. The Russians won two gold medals, so they should have come second in the event, but their federation is barred from participating as such by a decision of the International Olympic Committee. Cuba placed 25th out of 62 nations, tied with Brazil and Israel with fifth and seventh places.

Only one country from the Pan American Judo Confederation (PJC), Canada, edged out the West Indians with a medal of each colour.

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