

# *Cuba aims to remain at the forefront of Paris 2024*

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Havana, February 21 (JIT) - The director of high performance at the Cuban Sports Institute (Inder), José Antonio Miranda, said in Havana that Cuba aspires to remain an Olympic power.

"We are NOT renouncing to continue being an Olympic power," Miranda said on the radio programme Mesa Redonda (Round Table).

The senior official stressed that work is being done to keep Cuba among the top 20 nations on the medal table at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, scheduled to take place from 26 July to 12 August.

"Today the island has a pre-selection of 262 athletes, 94 of whom have already participated in this type of event.

Miranda pointed out that at the Tokyo 2020 Games, experiences were taken that have led to the continuous transformation in the technical and methodological direction, integration as a key factor and the generalisation of research results, backed by practice.

He also highlighted the link between conventional and Paralympic sport and praised the work of commissions and national federations to discuss training plans and contribute to the preparation of athletes.

So far, Cuba has 20 athletes qualified for the Parisian competition, a number that is expected to grow in the coming days.

Several sports have already qualified and aspire to increase their presence, such as athletics, which has 6, and volleyball, which could be the only team to compete in the quadrennial competition.

The island's coaches have identified 17 sports in the qualification pathway and are aiming for 20. Cuban athletes competed in 15 sports at Tokyo 2020.

The wrestler Mijaín López, who is preparing for his fifth Olympic title, was also mentioned. If he achieves it, he will go down in history as the only one with that number of Olympic titles under the five rings."He is well focused on his preparation," said Miranda, adding that the preparation includes training bases abroad and on national territory. Oscar Nuevo, methodological technical director of the Dirección Alto Rendimiento, evaluated a preparation that began with the goodbye to Tokyo 2020

He said that the athletes have been in shape for three years and also with a 2023 in which the V Alba Games in Venezuela 2023, the Central American and Caribbean Games in San Salvador 2023 and the Pan American Games in Santiago 2023 will be held. He also said that for various reasons, many of the athletes who could continue are not in the Cuban sports movement today and this meant that the preparation of the entire reserve had to be accelerated.

In the Paralympics, Cuba placed 35th in Tokyo 2020 and now aims to climb to 25th place in Paris 2024. To achieve this, according to M. Sc. Jorge Reinaldo Palma, technical head of the Department of Sport for People with Disabilities, strategies were outlined such as developing collective sports, as well as increasing the presence of athletes with other types of disability, such as those of short stature or those with some kind of intellectual limitation. Omara Durand and Yankiel Sol are the leaders of an army of around 25 para-athletes, nine more than in the previous event.

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