

Cuban judoka ready for Antalya Grand Slam

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Ankara, March 28 (PL) - Cuban judo fighters are ready to take part in the Grand Slam of Antalya, a city 480 kilometers south of the Turkish capital, starting tomorrow.

The team is headed by Andy Granda (+100 kg), Ivan Silva (90 kg) and the Olympic and world multi-medalist Idalys Ortiz (+78 kg), who like Maylin del Toro (63 kg) have practically secured their tickets for the event under the five rings of Paris 2024.

Granda is the best ranked in the world ranking (RM-third) and in the Olympic list (LO-fifth), in addition to his titles in the Pan American Games of Santiago 2023 and the America-Oceania Championship, held in Calgary, Canada, last September.

The Antillean super heavyweight also won silver and bronze medals at the Grand Prix Upper Austria and the Grand Slam of Tbilisi, respectively; and in Antalya he will be again among the top eight seeds together with the Finnish Martti Puumalainen (sixth in the RM), the Japanese Tatsuro Saito (10th place) and the

multi-champion of the world, the French Teddy Riner (eighth).

Completing the list of favorites are the Dutchman Jelle Snippe (12th), the well-known Brazilian Rafael Silva (13th), the Azerbaijani Ushangi Kokauri (14th) -plated in Tbilisi and winner in the semifinals of Granda- and the Slovakian Marius Fizel (20th), defeated by the Cuban in the discussion of the bronze in the Grand Slam.

Meanwhile, Ivan Silva (90 kg) will be the first seed, being the best ranked among the participants (RM-4 and LO-14), and his main opponents will be Hungary's Krisztian Toth, Japan's Sanshiro Murao, Uzbekistan's Davlat Babonov and Azerbaijan's Eljan Hajiyevev, who won silver in the Georgian capital and defeated Silva in the quarterfinals.

The native of the western Cuban province of Matanzas has in recent months won continental gold in Santiago 2023 and in Upper Austria, as well as fifth places in the Baku and Tashkent Grand Slams.

The veteran Ortiz (+78 kg) continues to rise in the world ranking (23rd place) and is in Olympic qualification positions after winning bronze in the Austrian competition and finishing fifth in Tbilisi.

Among the rest of the Cuban roster, Maylin del Toro (63 kg) stands out, who is also in Olympic qualification positions, but has not managed to go beyond three seventh places in the Grand Slams of Paris, Baku and Tbilisi.

Magdiel Estrada (73 kg) has not even reached the top eight in any of the last tournaments, but maintains the option of attending Paris 2024 thanks to the continental quota.

Far from the Olympic qualification spots are the promising Jonathan Charon (60 kg), Orlando Polanco (66 kg), Aleanny Carvajal (52 kg) and Lianet Cardona (78 kg), while Idelannis Gomez (70 kg) is recovering from an injury.

In the Antalya Grand Slam, 640 judokas (363 men and 277 women) from 93 countries will participate.

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