

# *Cuban swimmers still with Olympic quota options*

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Havana, June 3 (JIT).- Cuban swimmers keep alive the possibilities of accessing one of the Olympic tickets that World Aquatics will grant under the criterion of universality, when the classification process closes on June 24.

"Andrea Becali and Rodolfo Falcón Júnior have great options to be called up due to the scores they added in the process," Nelson García Fernández, national sports commissioner, told JIT.

He recalled that the capital city has a time of 2:00.70 minutes in the 200 meter freestyle, which gives it 820 points for the thousand table drawn up by the international federation in relation to the world record. Her countryman has a time of 15:49.72 minutes in the 1,500 meters of the same style, valid for 771 units.

However, we will have to wait for confirmation that could arrive between June 27 and July 1, when it will also be known which of the sexes will be assigned the place.

Andrea and Rodolfo recently competed alongside Laurent Estrada in the Canet and Barcelona series, two of the three that are part of the important Mare Nostrum circuit, which this year had a qualifying nature for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

"In general, I think they competed well and the set objectives were achieved, although there were results in Barcelona that did not go as we thought," commented the manager.

He also considered that at the Iberian event better performances were expected from Andrea and Laurent in the 200 meter freestyle, an event in which they achieved times of 2:02.22 and 2:05.70 minutes, respectively.

«In Laurent's case he started well, but he couldn't maintain the pace to improve his record. "Andrea came out reserved and had a hard time getting under two minutes and two seconds, which would have qualified her for the B final," he explained.

García Fernández highlighted Estrada's performance in the 100 meter backstroke, achieving 1:03.53 minutes, although the greatest praise went to the 1:03.33 he achieved in Canet the previous week, setting a new national record.

"It gives us confidence that the 1:03 barrier can be lowered at any time," he said.

Meanwhile, Falcón Júnior was much better, as he swam the 1,500 in 16:01.32 minutes, 18 seconds away from his personal best.

«We managed to maintain uniform rhythms within the distance and comply with the strategy outlined for him. He went from a negative result (in Canet) to an improved result in Barcelona. Despite the short time, we achieved it. The most important thing is that he knows the need to accumulate work," highlighted Luisa María Mojarrieta, coach of the trio.

Regarding her, Andrea reiterated that she is a talented swimmer, "but she requires higher ranges of intensity. She has an important brand and it is not so easy to improve it. We have to work in higher areas. Nothing is perfect and we train human beings, who are not always ready to do everything as we would like," she noted.

Regarding Laurent, the trainer said she was quite pleased with her performances in the backstroke events. «Despite some details, I think she did very well, since she is an athlete with little experience. Going below 1:03.7 on three occasions is an important result for her," she added.

"I think that, having achieved an important goal, which we even expected a few months ago, she set short-term goals and undoubtedly put pressure on herself," she said.

Mojarrieta explained that "when a goal is achieved we feel good, full of energy, with vitality and we think that we are going to take on the world, and sometimes we lose concentration, it is really difficult. Let us remember that a year ago Laurent was only the fourth woman in a relay post.

«Goals and purposes vary from person to person. You have to have them and I am happy because Laurent is hungry for results. This allows us to achieve our goals, but we have to take it little by little and direct the actions so that the wishes come true," she acknowledged.

The coach expressed that you have to have realistic goals and know the strategies to maintain concentration and be able to achieve better performance.

«This is key to performance. Laurent has not stopped moving forward, but it is human that he has some mistakes. "He is very young and we have to work a lot, but we are on the right track," she said.



## **Radio Habana Cuba**