

Olympic Boxing: Erislandy for the belt, bows for Arlen



Foto: Roberto Morejón, enviado especial

Havana, Aug 4 (JIT) Erislandy Alvarez (63.5 kg) advanced to the final of the boxing tournament of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games after dominating in the ring with a 5-0 victory over Georgian Lasha Guruli.

"We have already taken the next-to-last of the steps we proposed and now we are going all out for the gold", said the Cienfuegos native after celebrating for the fourth time in a North Paris Arena where this Sunday he was good in the three distances and managed at will the rhythm of the bout.

He showed it in the final act, when despite knowing he had an advantage, he increased his attack, because he always seeks to "leave a good final image and avoid doubts among the judges" and fully met the goal of enjoying while doing his homework.

Without the pressure of the premiere, he declared himself in optimum shape despite the effort accumulated during a week, "focused on the next fight, which will be the most important", and "happy for

the possibility of opting for the medal that the Cuban people want".

Making that dream come true will require him to take revenge on Wednesday against local idol Sofiane Oumiha, who defeated him last year for the 60 kg universal title and accumulates two other wins of that kind and silver in the Rio de Janeiro 2016 under the five rings.

BOWS FOR ARLEN

For his part, Arlen Lopez, who was looking here for a third coronation at this level, had as his opponent the Ukrainian Oleksandr Khyzhniak, a real "punching machine" who was second in Tokyo 2020 and led in the 2017 world championship.

The distinguished son of Guantanamo covered a good first act, in which four of the five officials saw him better, but since the intermission the European began to cut the distance, to take the exchanges to his ground, and the vote was for him 3-2.

True to his warrior soul, the star of the island tried to reverse the scenario in the farewell chapter, and gave himself a final of effective hits that many thought was enough. However, the verdict was complete for Khyzhniak and the overall score was 3-2 in his favor.

Arlen, who since his previous outing became the second Cuban to win such a medal in three weight divisions, preferred not to talk to reporters, before whom he passed quickly, with tears of frustration in his eyes.

It was the trace of the goodbye to the dream so long cherished in days of many sacrifices, those from which he also forged other successes, including the 2015 world title, to earn a place among the greats, beyond the pain for this setback.

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