

Mijaín López in Greco-Roman wrestling final and will fight for his fifth gold

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Mijaín López celebrates his victory over Azerbaijan's Sabah Saleh Shariati in the semi-finals of the +130 kg category of Greco-Roman wrestling at the Paris 2024 Olympics

Paris, August 5 (RHC /AFP) – Cuba's Mijaín López advanced on Monday to the final of the 130-kilogram Greco-Roman wrestling at the Paris 2024 Games, in which he will seek a historic fifth consecutive Olympic gold, something that no athlete has achieved before in the same individual event.

The 41-year-old Cuban giant, undefeated since Beijing 2008, beat Azerbaijan's Sabah Saleh Shariati in the semi-finals by a score of 1:00 4-1 in front of some 7,000 fans at the Champ de Mars stadium in Paris who chanted "Lopez, Lopez."

Stronger and more dynamic than Shariati, bronze medalist in Tokyo-2020, Lopez won the first half 3-0. In the second, the Azerbaijani could only get close with a point due to passivity, but Lopez scored another with a reverse.

Lopez's rival in the final will be another Cuban-born fighter, Yasmani Acosta, who under the Chilean flag beat the Chinese Meng Lingzhe in the other semi-final.

Making his debut in his sixth Games on Monday, López clearly won his first two bouts against South Korean Lee Seungchan (7-0) and Iranian Amin Mirzazadeh (3-1), world champion in 2023.

The giant from Herradura finished in fifth place in Athens-2004 and then swept the titles in Beijing-2008, London-2012, Rio de Janeiro-2016 and Tokyo-2020.

These four crowns include him in an exclusive club along with Americans Michael Phelps, Carl Lewis, Al Oerter, Vincent Hancock and Katie Ledecky, Dane Paul Elvstrom and Japanese fighter Icho Kaori.

Before vying to create his own five-gold club, López has guaranteed a third medal for Cuba at these Games, after the bronze of boxer Arlen López and the medal won by another boxer, Erislandy Álvarez, in the lightweight final (63.5).

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