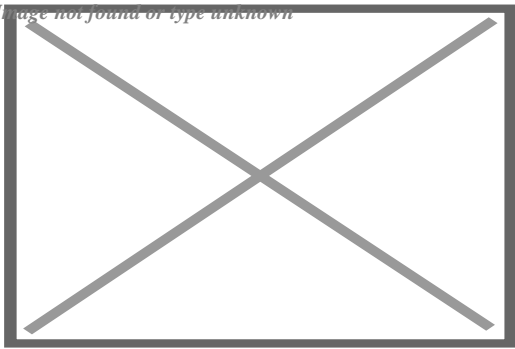


Cuban champion to defend top place in Ibero-American Chess Championship

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Luis Ernesto Quesada

Havana, Sept 29 (ACN) Cuban champion Luis Ernesto Quesada will try today to maintain his solitary leadership in the Ibero-American Chess Championship of Linares 2024, which is being played in Spain and has only three rounds left to finish.

Luis Ernesto reached 5.5 points out of a possible six, which places him with his companions at the top of the competition, after defeating this Saturday the host Daniel Garcia, in a game that went up to the 56th move of an Italian opening.

This was the fifth consecutive victory for the player from Ciego de Ávila, who only "stumbled" with a draw in the first date against the Spanish Adhara Rodriguez.

On Sunday, the Cuban Grandmaster will lead the white figures as opponent of his Colombian counterpart Santiago Avila, owner of five units and in third place by tiebreaker.

In spite of his recent setback, Spaniard Garcia is also in second place with a five-point score, and his next opponent will be Chile's Cristobal Henriquez, defending champion of the event.

Also competing for Cuba is Havana's Ernesto Fernandez, who won the sixth day of the competition against Spain's Alex Garrido. With that performance he managed to score 4.5 points and now occupies the tenth place in the ranking that groups more than 110 contestants.

The rival for his seventh incursion will be the experienced Francisco Vallejo -another home player-, better pre-classified by Elo and known by the Cuban chess fans for his regular appearances in Cuban

tournaments.

The representation of the island is completed by Cristian Vitier, with discreet performances so far. After splitting honors in his most recent duel with Spain's Rebeca Jimenez, he reached 3.5 units, which places him in 37th place, from where he will face Portugal's Samuel Goncalves.

The first edition of the Ibero-American tournaments was held in Ayamonte, Spain, in 2006. At that time, the champion was Lazaro Bruzon from Cuba -he no longer represents the Cuban federation-, who repeated his reign in the 2015 edition of Bilbao.

Camagüey's Carlos Daniel Albornoz came second in the 2019 edition, also held in Linares. A year ago, the competition was hosted by Panama and Henry Soto starred in the most outstanding performance of the Cuban armada, taking third place.

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