

# *Sports summary 2004*

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**Mijaín López**

Havana, Dec 22 (RHC) Cuban sports bid farewell to two of its great icons, Mijaín López and Omara Durand, in 2024. With excellent performances at the Olympic Games in Paris, both closed their careers as Gods of Olympus.

As it happens every four years, the world came to a standstill with the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris. All of Cuba had an additional incentive in the so-called City of Light: to find out if the most successful wrestler in history would continue to add to his record and become the only athlete to reach the top of the podium in an individual discipline in five different Olympic Games.

The idol of Herradura did not disappoint, and one after another, he defeated rivals until achieving the feat in the 130 kg Greco-Roman style.

Elected once again as Sportsman of the Year in Cuba, Mijaín proved that not even the God Chrono could defeat him on a wrestling mat. He maintained his Olympic undefeated record and added that of Paris 2024 to his gold medals from Beijing 2008, London 2012, Rio 2016, and Tokyo 2020.

In addition, he treasured the best record for a Cuban in the Olympic Games and left a trail of glory that is extremely difficult to match.

However, in Paris, the island was unable to meet its goal of placing among the top 20 Olympic powers and fell to 32nd place with nine medals (2-1-6), its lowest figure since Munich 1972, when it won eight.



**Omara Durand and Yuniol Kindelán**

In the Paralympic event, Omara Durand put an end to her sports career to dedicate more time to her family. She closed as the great athlete she is, with three more gold medals.

Accompanied by her guide Yuniol Kindelán, Omara won the 100-, 200-, and 400-meter titles, confirming her status as the most-awarded Paralympic athlete of all time.

In addition to the



**Robiel Yamkiel Sol**

impressive legacy of Omara Durand, the reigning world record holder in the long jump, Robiel Yankiel Sol, also won the gold medal. Also, the gold medal of javelinist Guillermo Varona, the bronze medal in the same discipline of Ulicer Aguilera, and the subtitle of Yamel Luis Vives in the hectometer.

Yunier Fernandez also wrote his name with golden letters, achieving the greatest prize in table tennis. A total of 10 medals were won and the 24th place by nations, with athletics as the most outstanding sport.

Returning to the Olympic Games, in addition to Mijaín's milestone, wrestling was, in general, the most outstanding discipline for Cuba, with silver medals for Yusneylis Guzmán and bronze medals for Milaymis Marín, Luis Orta, and Gabriel Rosillo.

In the case of Guzmán, she became the first Cuban woman to win an Olympic medal in wrestling, for which she deserved the distinction of Sportswoman of the Year in Cuba.

Meanwhile, Yarisleidis Cirilo kept Cuban canoeing on the Olympic podium with her third place in the 200-meter C1, and Rafael Alba won his second Olympic bronze medal in taekwondo.

Boxing contributed less than expected, although it remained the discipline with the most medals for Cuba under the five rings.

Erislandy Alvarez surprised with his title in the 63.5 kg and Arlen Lopez added his third Olympic medal, bronze in 80 kg, but the rest of the squad was left off the podium, including the stellar Julio Cesar La Cruz, who was looking to make history with a third crown.

Other  
outstanding



**Erislandy Alvarez.**

performances came from Paris, such as that of the beach volleyball duo of Jorge Luis Alayo and Noslen Diaz, who only lost to the eventual champions, after leading their difficult match undefeated.

It is worth mentioning that the duo from the island reigned during the year in two final phases of the Norceca Tour, and compiled significant performances in the strong national championship in Russia and the World Tour.

Another who stood out in Paris was Liadagmis Povea, with a fourth place in the triple jump, an event in which one of the favorites, also Cuban Leyanis Perez, was not at her best and came in fifth.

Daily Cooper also deserved to be applauded for being one step away from the 800m final, the double Olympic medalist in shooting, Leuris Pupo, could not reach another final in his seventh Games, and the judo team was left without medals for the first time in decades, although Andy Granda (+100 kg) left a good taste when he lost in a close race.

It is fair to say that judo has been one of the sports hardest hit by the abandonment of stars in recent years.

In the French capital, more than twenty Cuban athletes competed for 13 other countries and won 8 medals, with highlights for Jordan Diaz (Spain), Pedro Pablo Pichardo (Portugal), and Andy Diaz (Italy), who took an unprecedented podium in the triple jump.

The chapter on the year's disappointments was headed by the Cuba baseball team with its eleventh and penultimate place in the main tournament of the year, the Premier 12.

However, the island's national sport redeemed itself with titles in the Baseball5 World Championship, the World Cup for the Blind, and the Caribbean Cup U-15, and the distinction for Liván Moinelo as the Best Pitcher of the Pacific League, in Japan.

Erick Hernández, author of five world records, and Jhoen Lefont, with four in the water, shone in special sports,

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