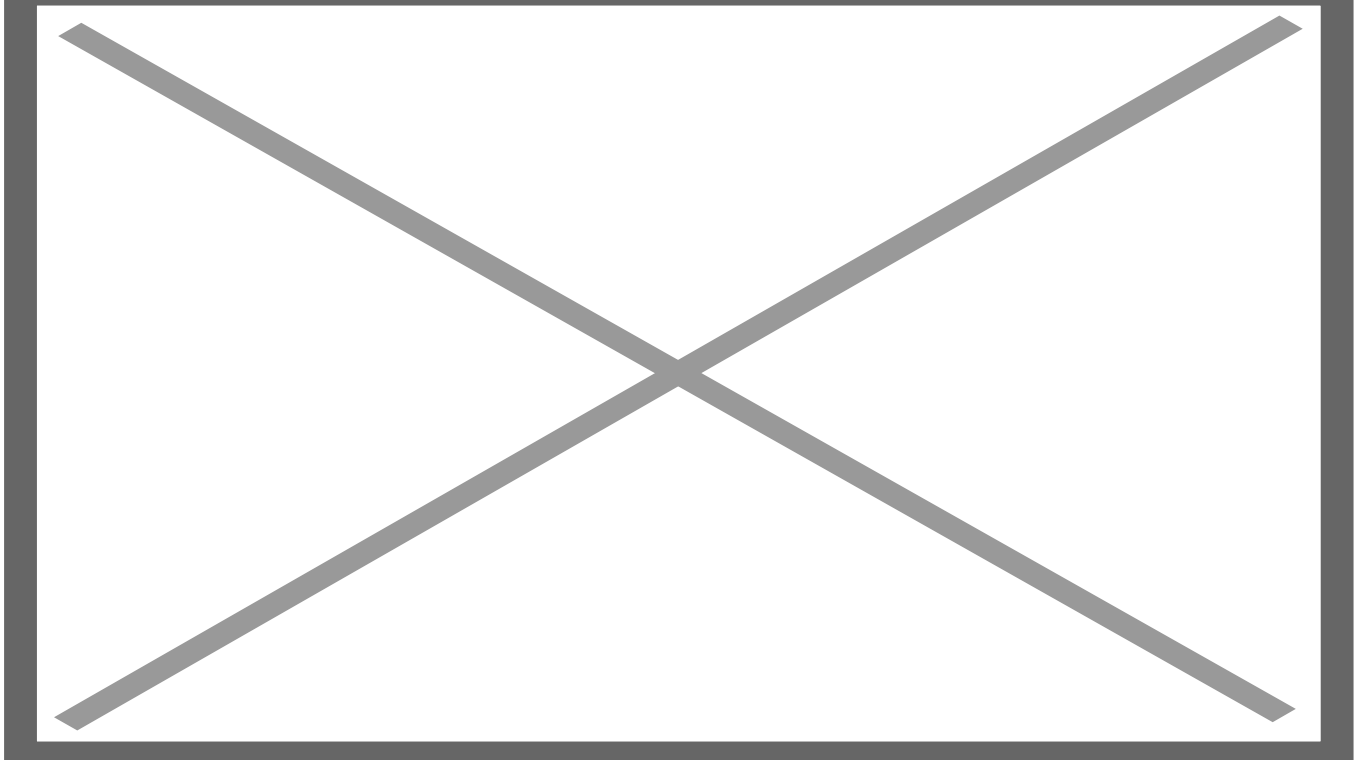


Sotomayor invited to dialogue with influential Italian sports media

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Javier Sotomayor, Olympic champion. (Photo: AFP)

Havana, October 12 (RHC)-- Cuban athlete Javier Sotomayor, the best high jumper in history, spoke about his record and other topics of interest, in an interview with La Gazzetta Dello Sport, in which he shared the microphone with Italian Gianmarco Tamberi.

For almost an hour, the prestigious Italian newspaper spoke simultaneously via Internet with Tamberi, Italy's record holder (2.39), and with the human being who has jumped the highest -- Javier Sotomayor (2.45) -- who was interviewed from his residence in Havana, as he was unable to travel to Milan due to obstacles in the air connections by COVID-19.

Under the title "Challenge in time Sotomayor-Tamberi," the Gazzetta reviewed the main topics addressed in the unpublished talk, in an extensive article illustrated with photos of the protagonists and their personal files.

Sotomayor, who is 52 years old, and Tamberi, 28, made it clear that training and mentality are key to gain one more centimeter and agreed that to succeed, "pressure is fundamental."

"Raising the bar is the basis of our sport: attacking the rod, mentally even before physically," explained Sotomayor, who was baptized as the "Prince of the Heights", current world record holder and Olympic champion in Barcelona 92.

The Italian, world indoor monarch in Portland-2016, explained that he bases his results mainly on the technique and the pressure that the public transmits to him.

Tamberi, native of Civitanova, pondered Sotomayor's physical qualities, emphasizing: "He focused on strength, he was very muscular; he worked a lot on speed. If today we had a race of any kind, I am sure he would win. How old is Sotomayor, 32?," ironically stated Tamberi, and underlined that the Cuban who turns 53 this Tuesday is in "splendid shape."

The native of Limonar (Matanzas) preferred not to predict if Tamberi will be able to reach his record of 2.45, although he considered that in Tokyo he will be able to fight for the medal that he could not win in Rio-2016 because of an injury.

Referring to his first relationship with Italian athletics, Sotomayor recalled that when he was young, he received "a graphic sequence of a jump by Sara Simeoni (former world record holder and Olympic champion in Moscow-80). I wanted to learn to jump like her," Javier Sotomayor said.

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