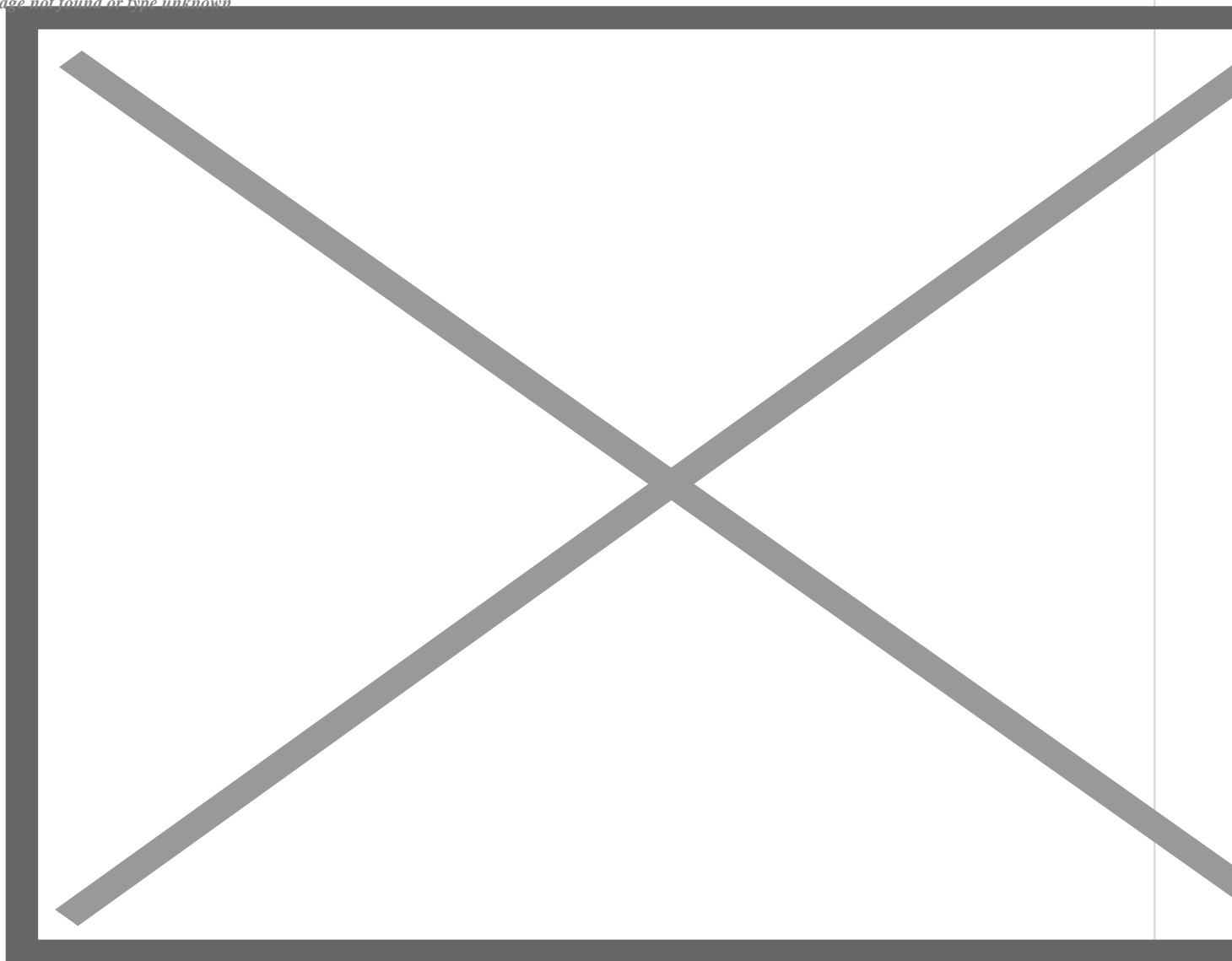


Savón and Leonardo light up Cuba's medal tally at Tokyo Paralympics

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Leinier Savon at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics

Tokyo, August 30 (RHC/PL)-- Long jumper Leinier Savon turned on the medal lights for Cuba at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games on Monday, winning silver in the T12 class, for the visually impaired, on a day when his compatriot Leonardo Diaz won bronze in discus in the F46 class.

In an emotional event, Savón reached 7.16 meters, a personal best and Pan American record, to win his third medal in the Paralympics after the two titles won in Rio de Janeiro 2016 and the first of Cuba in the Japanese competition, scheduled until Sunday.

The 32-year-old Caribbean native of the eastern Cuban province of Guantanamo, left behind the 6.89 meters achieved by him this season to climb the podium of awards, only ahead of the Iranian Amir Khosravani, monarch, with 7.21 meters, and ahead of the Azerbaijani Dijo Najafzade, third (7.03).

After opening the path of the medals for Cuba in the Japanese competition, Savon kept an exclusive interview with Prensa Latina and described as 'very nice' to give his country the first medal after not being able to do it in the 100 meters, an event in which he was among the favorites and did not pass the qualifying phase, despite being one of the specialties of his preference.

He arrived very motivated not to lose the opportunity to win a medal, 'I wiped my tears and came here to give everything in the jump' to leave behind the poor performance in the hectometer. In addition, he qualified the level of the competition as high with athletes over seven meters and knew that in order to obtain a medal he had to surpass that mark, and with a first attempt of 6.92 meters it would not be enough to finish among the first three, that is why he went out determined to look for a better record.

Now I am going to enjoy this medal and then maintain my dedication in training to defend my flag and continue on the podium because I love athletics," he said.

Savón dedicated the medal to the Cuban people, in such a complex moment for the Antillean nation due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, to his family, to the Cuban Revolution and, especially, to his mother and young daughter, to all the teachers and training team, who always trusted him and never lost faith.

The joys of the largest of the Antilles continued on Monday, with the bronze medal of Leonardo Díaz in the F56 class, for field athletes with a progressive disability from the upper part of the legs to the feet or the absence of limbs.

Diaz, 46, threw the discus to 43, 36 meters to win his fourth Paralympic Games medal after two crowns (Beijing 2018 and London 2012) and one bronze (Rio de Janeiro 2016).

The scepter of the specialty was held by Brazil's Claudiney Batista dos Santos with a Paralympic record of 45.59, and the runner-up was India's Yogesh Kathuniya (44.38).

For Latin America, Chile's Francisca Mardones won the F54 class with a world record of 8.33 meters and gave the South American nation the second gold medal of the Japanese competition.

Mardones, who competes in a category for field athletes with mid-torso and leg movement, broke her own world record of 8.19, achieved on November 12, 2019 in Dubai, to relegate Mexico's Gloria Zarza, second (8.06) and Uzbekistan's Nurkhon Kurbanova, third (7.77).

The athletics day opened with the crown of Mexico's Monica Olivia Rodriguez in the 1,500 meters, category T11, with a world record of 4.37.40 minutes to break the 4.38.92 record of China's Jin Zheng, achieved on September 17 at the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Paralympics.

The runner-up was South Africa's Louzanne Coetzee with an African record of 4.40.96, and the third place went to Kenya's Nancy Chelangat Koech (4.45.58).

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