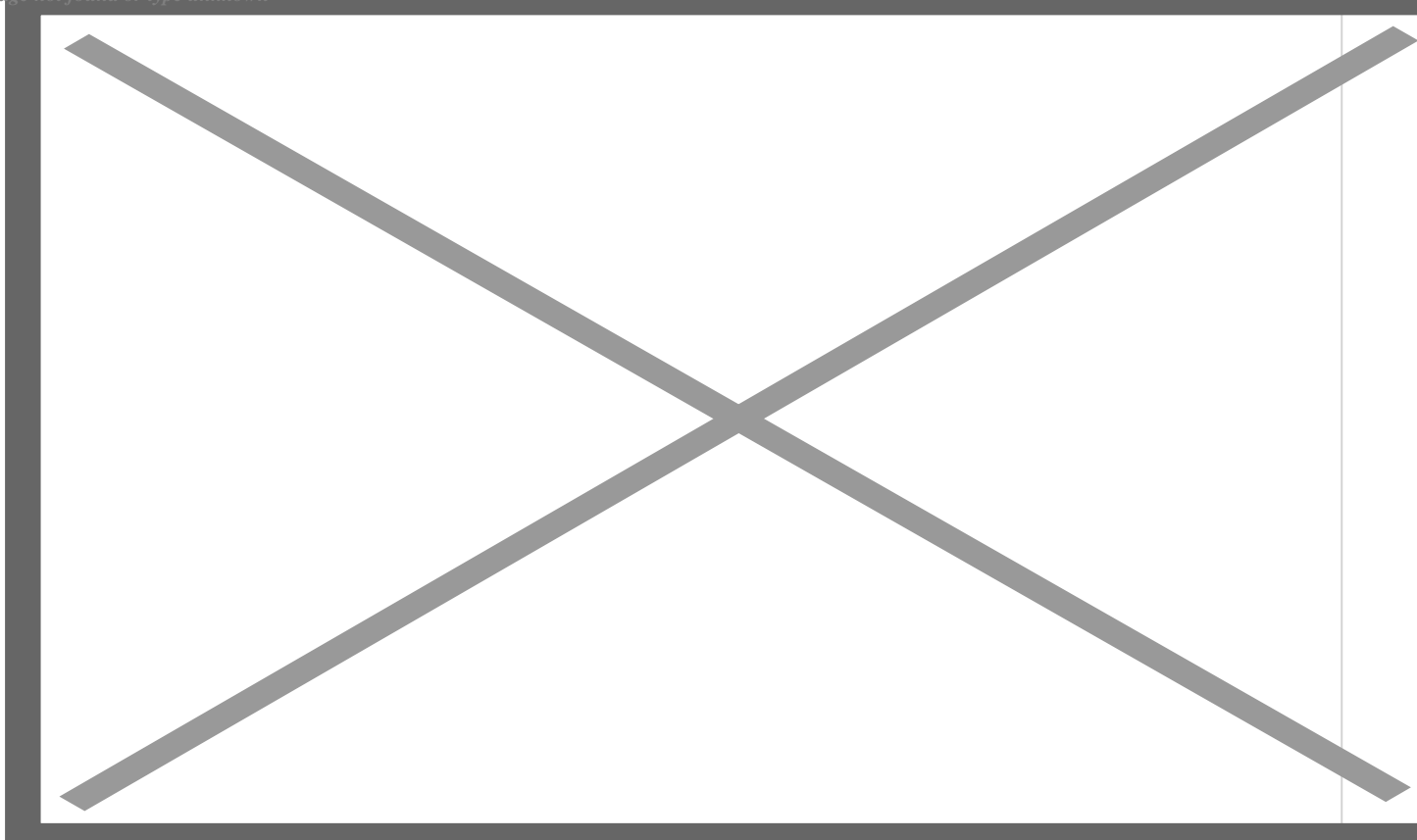


Freire and Fleitas: Mountain Bike Challenger champions

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Mountain bike

Playa Ancon, January 24 (RHC/JIT)-- Cubans Yoandry Freire and Ludisneli Fleitas became the champions of the First Escambray Mountain Bike Challenger concluded in the beach resort of Playa Ancon, south of Sancti Spiritus.

The third and last stage, of 30 kilometers, was pedaled from the Manacal campground located at the foot of the mythical Topes de Collantes massif.

Freire did honor to his group Los Manigüeros, main organizer of the competition, by winning the first two purely mountainous days and crossing the finish line on Sunday in sixth place.

His teammate, the tireless Jorge Rojas, leader in all the logistics of the race along with his father Jorge Luis, confirmed his physical capacity by winning the demanding sprint on the sand and rounding off an admirable performance, as in his best days in the Cuban road cycling team. Earlier he placed fourth and fifth, despite his extra responsibilities.

"We are both very happy, we dreamed for a long time to make this event a reality and for everything to go well, which we corroborated by the opinions of the competitors. That fills us with double joy," said the combative cyclist to JIT, who together with his staff is already planning a second version that includes greater international participation.

This time representatives from Ecuador, Slovenia and Venezuela, who intend to bring other competitors, were motivated to participate.

Precisely the Ecuadorian Jorge Brito was one of the main animators in the elite category, escorting Freire in the first two stages and crossing the finish line two seconds ahead of his Cuban friend and adversary, to secure the overall subtitle.

"We have also raced in my country, Freire is a great athlete and very well prepared. I was a while without riding because I suffered a sprain, but I wanted to reciprocate the invitation. I wanted to get to know Cuba and in fact I am staying a few more days. The event has all the elements to aspire to a higher rank, the route and the landscapes are beautiful, the geography is suitable for this sport," he told JIT.

In the women's sector, the favorite Ludisneli Fleitas, due to her experience in the national team and international competitions, won the race. She excelled in the lomerío, where she easily showed her slim figure, and also showed her skills crossing rivers and overcoming obstacles through shortcuts. This Sunday he also showed his power to pedal on the fine sand, hard terrain in which he made his debut today.

"The stage was quite hard, at the beginning with hills and rocks, and the descents were very dangerous. I almost fell. But the course is also beautiful and even more so the finish on the beach. They should keep this race, it was excellent," he said after entering in 21st place among 61 competitors, as Slovenian Tomaz Jeraz did not take the start, who in the second stage broke his "montañesa" and walked almost 40 kilometers.

OVERALL WINNERS

Men

1. Yoandry Freire (Elite group, Sancti Spíritus) 5:35.02 hours.
2. Jorge Brito (Elite group, Ecuador) 5:39.59.
3. Orestes Martínez (Master B, SSP) 6:21.37.

Women

1. Ludisneli Fleitas (Havana, national team) 7:28.05.
2. Kelly Méndez (Havana) 8:12.00.
3. Yeranis Morejón (Sancti Spíritus) 9:03.16.

Master A

Orestes Martínez (Sancti Spíritus)

Master B

Alexei Martínez (Sancti Spíritus)

Master C

Alexander Casa (Artemisa)

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