

Judoka Ivan Silva returns to save the honor at Grand Slam

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Havana, February 20 (RHC)-- Matanzas world runner-up Ivan Silva won the bronze medal at the closing of the Grand Slam in Tel Aviv, Israel, the best performance of the Cuban judo delegation so far this season.

Silva, of 90 kilograms (kg), won the D key of his division, after being bye in the first round and defeating by Ippon the French Maxime-Gae Ngayap Hambou and the Turkish Mihael Zgank.

According to the live television broadcast on the International Judo Federation's website, the Cuban fighter delivered a superb and flashing backward projection after mowing down the Frenchman's right leg on the outside at 2:49 minutes of combat and then used a similar technique against the Turk at 3:59 minutes of the fight.

In the semifinal, the Cuban fought hard, but in a continuous action he was left vulnerable while trying to project his opponent and lost suddenly by Waza-ari in Golden Rule (overtime), at 5:59 minutes of fight against Serbian Nemanja Majdov, who was runner-up after being dominated in the final by Azerbaijan's Mammadali Mehdiyev.

Finally, in the repechage for the bronze medal, Silva defeated Dutchman Jesper Smink by Waza-ari.

Also competing for Cuba were Thalia Nariño (over 78 kg), eliminated in her first outing by Ippon against Kazakhstan's Kamila Berlikash; and Andy Granda (over 100 kg), who won by Ippon against Kazakhstan's Adil Orazbayev and then fell in Golden Rule by disqualification after receiving three Shido (warnings) against Brazil's Rafael Silva.

The Cuban super heavyweight beat Ukrainian Yakiv Khammo at the start of the repechage, who was disqualified when the timer read 4:45 minutes, the same way Granda lost in the bronze duel against Tajikistan's Temur Rakhimov.

The remaining nine Cubans were eliminated in the two previous days, a similar result to the first event of the season, the Grand Slam of Paris, on February 5 and 6.

Cuba will also participate in the Grand Slam of Tbilisi, Georgia (March 25-27); and Antalya, Turkey (April 1-3).

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