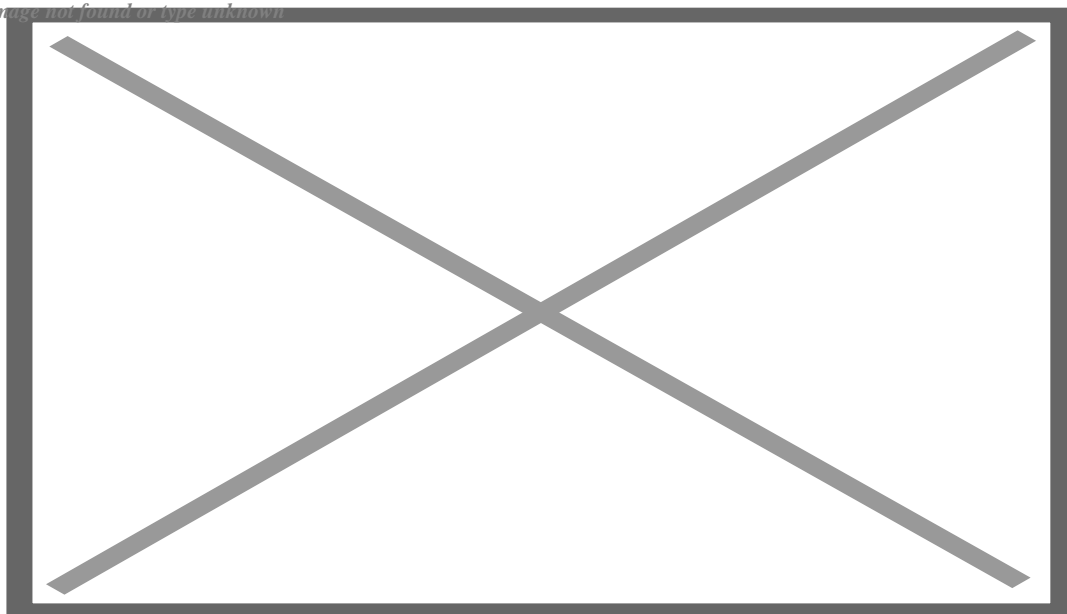


Three decades after Cuba's 1992 Barcelona Games

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Barcelona Games

Havana, July 25 (JIT) - Contrary to the predictions of many, Cuba's absence from the two previous editions of the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 did not cause a debacle for Cuba. On the contrary.

Its athletic embassy won 14 titles, six silver medals and 11 bronze medals, a harvest that earned it a fifth place by countries registered as the best of the Island in the history of those competitions.

"If the results of an Olympic Games were measured by the gold per capita obtained by a country, we would be in first place in these Olympics," said Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz.

The fact takes up topicality in the context of the 30th anniversary of the event, held from July 25 to August 9 in the so-called Ciudad Condal, where exponents of 169 delegations competed and 257 scepters were distributed.

Cuba, which did not take part in the Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988 versions, arrived on Spanish soil with 192 competitors and had in boxing the most advanced of its results with the contribution of seven crowns.

Rogelio Marcelo (48 kg), Joel Casamayor (54 kg), Héctor Vinent (63.5 kg), Juan Carlos Lemus (71 kg), Ariel Hernández (75 kg), Félix Savón (91 kg) and Roberto Balado (+ 91 kg) completed the feat between the ropes.

Mireya Luis and her teammates dominated undefeated the volleyball tournament, sealed with a 3-1 set win against the Commonwealth of Independent States; and Javier Sotomayor in the high jump with 2.34 meters achieved in the first attempt.

In athletics, Maritza Martén (70.06 meters) was also a top athlete, and on the wrestling mats came the golden awards of Alejandro Puerto (57 kg) and Héctor Milián (100 kg), in the freestyle and classic styles, respectively.

Judo saw Odalys Revé (66 kg) shine and baseball's official debut was marked by a team that had Omar Linares among its stars, who finished undefeated in nine outings in which he scored 103 runs and allowed 16.

It turned out to be the first party under the five rings without boycott since the one held in Munich 1972. Barcelona 1992 was an excellent host and Cuba reached the podium in eight sports.

The event opened its doors to professional basketball players, lit its cauldron with a bang and showed the world the friendliness of the Cobi dog, a mascot inspired by the Catalan shepherd breed.

The top of the medal table was occupied by the Commonwealth of Independent States (46-39-30), with the United States (38-35-37) and Germany (36-21-28) as the main runners-up.

Then came China (16-22-16), immediate predecessor of a Cuba that had the privilege of having Fidel at the opening ceremony, included in the collateral program of the II Ibero-American Summit, held in Madrid.

"The most remarkable thing is that out of a delegation of 192 athletes, 146 were among the top eight in the world.... I think that says as much as any other data, or says as much as all the other data together," he said on August 10 at the ceremony to welcome his compatriots.

"I congratulate you, I greet you, I embrace you in the name of the people", said the leader of the Revolution to those who made the news in the midst of a complex economic situation, derived from the collapse of the socialist camp and the intensification of the U.S. blockade.

It was a historic performance, which had among its protagonists several figures ratified in the elite in Atlanta 1996, a scenario lacking the organizational goodness guaranteed by the Spaniards.

Barcelona as we miss you, Gold medal to chaos, and Atlanta breaks records of disasters were among the headlines that summarized the prevailing atmosphere there, while the one enjoyed four years ago, when Cuba was more than ever in touch with Olympic glory, was missed.

CUBAN MEDALISTS IN BARCELONA 1992

Gold (14): Javier Sotomayor (athletics/high jump), Maritza Martén (athletics/disco), baseball team, Rogelio Marcelo (boxing/48 kg), Joel Casamayor (boxing/54 kg), Héctor Vinent (boxing/63.5 kg), Juan Carlos Lemus (boxing/71 kg), Ariel Hernández (boxing/75 kg), Félix Savón (boxing/91 kg), Roberto Balado (boxing/+91 kg), Odalys Revé (judo/66 kg), Héctor Milián (Greco-Roman wrestling/100 kg), Alejandro Puerto (wrestling/57 kg) and women's volleyball team.

Silver (6): Men's 4x400 relay (athletics), Raúl González (boxing/51 kg), Juan Hernández Sierra (boxing/67 kg), Estela Rodríguez (Judo/+72 kg), men's foil team (fencing) and Pablo Lara (weightlifting/75 kg).

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