

With two finals Cuba will say goodbye to the Under-20 World Championship in Athletics

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Yarima Garcia

Cali, August 5 (JIT) - With the finals of the hammer throw and the 200 meters Cuba will close this Friday its incursions in the World U-20 Athletics Championships in Cali 2022, which still without lowering its curtains has made it clear that many of its protagonists are ready to shine also among seniors.

The final point for the reduced delegation of the Island will be entirely female, with Leidis Viamonte in the throwing circle and Yarima Garcia in what will be her fifth outing on the track of the Pascual Guerrero Olympic Stadium, where she has left the mark of three personal bests.

The 18-year-old girl "snuck" into the final of the double hectometer with a time of 23.40 seconds, now her lifetime best, which erased the time of 23.46 seconds set hours earlier during the heats.

If at the end of the first of those times she was surprised to lower her mark by almost 40 hundredths of a second, Yarima could not believe her new achievement in the afternoon.

"I have prepared for this... but I am really surprised, something like this can only be achieved by going the extra mile," she told JIT in the mixed zone of the Pascual Guerrero.

"It was a very hard race, I felt I was among the favorites and offered war until the end," said the Camagüeyan, who has been lowering her records throughout this year and on her rest the hopes of seeing Cuba inserted again in the women's sprint events at the world level.

The only time that the island has enjoyed a medal in the 200 meters in these championships was in 1988 with Liliana Allen as the protagonist. As difficult as it may seem now, dreaming of Yarima reaching the podium does not cost anything, neither for her nor for her followers.

The best time in the semifinals was set by Jamaica's Brianna Lyston with 22.83 seconds and four other women who qualified for the final also improved their personal bests.

In the case of Viamonte, she got her ticket among the 12 athletes who will compete for medals in the hammer from Friday. She did it with a record of 58.99 meters and most likely she will need to improve it to reach the goal of being included among the first eight.

Thursday's closing of the day did not leave one of the most expected results. All the followers of the event believed in the easy reign of Botswana's Letsile Tebogo in the 200m final, as there were plenty of reasons to think that Usain Bolt's "heir" was going to run the distance.

What he had seen in the 100 meters with his world record of 9.91 seconds and in the heats of the 200 meters with 19.99 seconds... seemed to be a mere formality. However, none of that happened and Tegobo did not have the best record of the semifinals.

Israel's Blessing Akawase Afrifah, running for a different heat, completed a sub-20 record for his country with 20.17 seconds and was better than Tebogogo's 20.23. As if that was not enough, in the final both set the championship record with 19.96 seconds!

In the photo finish, Blessing took the best part, he is the new champion and as a year ago in the edition of these competitions held in Nairobi, Tebogo had to settle for the silver.

As for the medal count, the United States increased its gold medals to five, Kenya follows with three and there are 12 countries that have at least one title in a competition that has only a couple of dates left to say goodbye to this warm city of Valle del Cauca.

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