

Cuban track and field star returns to training and hopes to be readmitted to the national team

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Havana, February 1 (RHC).- Cuba's Juan Miguel Echevarría, one of the stars of world athletics, has returned to training and hopes to be readmitted to the island's national team, seven months after requesting his leave.

"He has been training with me for about a week, but we have to wait, his official return must be authorized by the National Commission," Juan Gualberto Nápoles, who is training the 24-year-old long jumper laureate at the Pan American Stadium in eastern Havana, told Radio Habana Cuba (www.radiohc.cu).

"I see him taller, he has grown. He maintains his skills, although he is just starting, he is an athlete who picks up his sporting form quickly," added Nápoles, who has already trained Echevarría in his youth and other jumpers such as Olympic bronze medalist Maikel Massó and world youth medalists Léster Lescay, Maikel Vidal, Irisdaimi Herrera and his son, triple jumper Cristian Nápoles.

The coach recalled that Echevarría, Olympic runner-up in Tokyo-2020 and world indoor champion in Birmingham-2018, requested his withdrawal last 2022 - he claimed personal problems - and now he must go through a legal process (for his readmission), like others who have returned and had also requested their departure" from the national team.

In that case are, among others, Juan Gualberto Nápoles himself, his son Cristian, fourth in the world in triple jump, and the world champion and Olympic silver medalist in pole vault, Yarisley Silva, who returned to the Cuban athletics team after some time out of their own free will. Silva is currently away from the track again because she is pregnant.

Although Echevarría's return seems a matter of time, she must wait for the authorization of the National Athletics Commission, whose main director, the recently appointed National Commissioner in replacement of Yipsi Moreno, Rolando Charró, is in Europe with the group of athletes of the island that is making the winter tour.

If Echevarría's return becomes a reality, Cuban athletics would be strengthened with a view to the main competitions of the year: the Central American and Caribbean Games in San Salvador and the Pan American Games in Santiago de Chile.

Considered one of the stars of athletics in recent years, the native of Camagüey exhibits in his record the Olympic subtitle in Tokyo-2020, the world indoor gold in Birmingham-2018 and the bronze in the Doha-2019 World Outdoor Championships.

In addition, he boasts a personal best of 8.68 m achieved in June 2018, which made him the long jumper who has gone the farthest under the age of 20 and left him just 3 centimeters short of the Cuban record, held since 1995 by the phenomenal Ivan Pedroso (8.71)

Due to his talent and potential (1.86 m and 72 kg), the International Federation and experts pointed him out as the first human with real options to surpass the 9-meter barrier, a mark he brushed with the wind at his back, when he jumped 8.92 in March 2019 in a competition in Havana.

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