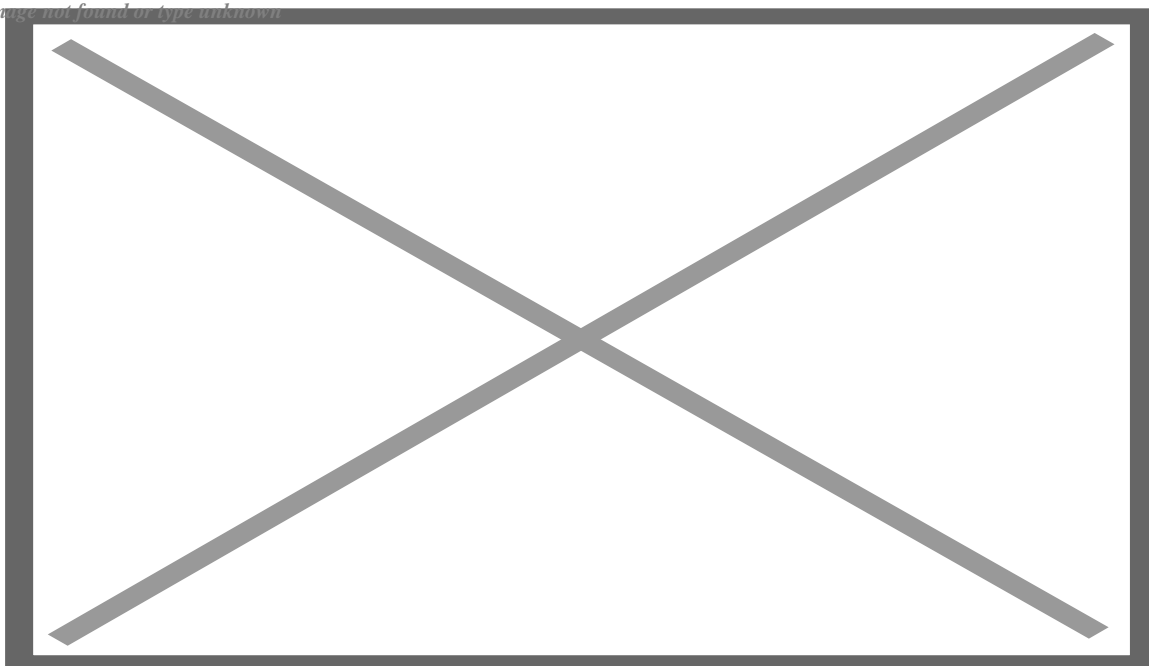


# *Cuban gymnasts tried out at the top of the world*

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**Gretel Mendoza**

Havana, March 2 (JIT) - After several weeks of preparation in Russia, Cuban rhythmic gymnasts Gretel Mendoza and Isabella Rojas tested themselves in the national championship of that country, the strongest in the world.

The event took place in Moscow, where they were invited as guests and lived a unique experience among world and Olympic champions.

"They had the opportunity to see the best gymnasts up close and also to be graded by Russian judges who have a high level of demand," coach Nely Ochoa told JIT.

"They tested on all four apparatuses and included the new elements incorporated into the programs," Ochoa explained, pleased with an experience she has made the most of.

Gretel, main figure in the individual modality, achieved scores of 25.000 in hoop, 28.500 in ball, 24.800 in clubs and 27.450 in ribbon, according to data offered by the national commissioner of rhythmic

gymnastics Yainet Villalta.

"In the ball and ribbon events she had no falls of the implement, and achieved a good effectiveness of the elements that make up the composition," recognized Ochoa.

Of Isabella, first year in the adult category, it was learned that she achieved scores of 22.700 in ball, 21.400 in ribbon, 22.650 in hoop and the best of 24.450 in clubs.

"She is the youngest of the group and her programs have become more complicated, but she had a good performance according to her level and experience," assured the experienced coach.

The Cubans were invited by Alina Kavaeva to the training center based in the resort of Sochi and since the beginning of February they set themselves the task of adjusting the programs, reviewing the musical themes and especially insisting on the technical elements.

"I am delighted to be able to perform here among such famous gymnasts. I love Russia and everything about it, and I would really like to be like Alina Kabaeva," Gretel said after the competition.

Russian media reported the presence of the Cubans at the competition. In several images they were accompanied by Julia Bravikova, who for two weeks has guided the work in Sochi.

The group also included Thalia Torres and Keyla Miranda, but it was decided that they were not ready to compete because their programs were almost completely renewed.

That quartet is preparing to attend the Central American and Caribbean Games of San Salvador 2023, in which Cuba will be with a full team in the individual modality and also in the two programs of the ensemble specialty.

In June there will be an important moment with the Pan American Rhythmic Gymnastics Championship of Guadalajara 2023, which will be a qualifier for the Pan American Games of Santiago 2023.

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