

Joven Parada to follow Cuban show jumping tradition and dreaming of the finals

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Cuba's Alejandro Parada

Havana, August 17 (RHC) - Young Alejandro Parada, one of Cuba's promising long jumpers, is determined to continue the island's tradition in this specialty and hopes to advance to the final at the World Athletics Championships Budapest-2023.

"I feel good. The goal we have is to make it to the final. Already being in a world championship (for adults) is a great achievement and if I advance to the final it would be overachieving," said Parada through social networks from Budapest, in statements to Radio Habana Cuba (www.radiohc.cu).

Runner-up in the Under-20 World Championship last year in Cali (Colombia) and champion of the Centrocaribes of San Salvador-2023, the jumper from Santiago de Cuba, who recently turned 19 years old, has a personal record of 8.15m achieved in March in Havana.

Nicknamed "the shark" within the Cuban athletics family, his qualification to the World Championships - from August 19 to 27 - came about thanks to his 31st place in the world ranking, after a season in which he was included for the first time in the summer tour.

Among his best performances in the season - he held thirteen competitions in Cuba, Sweden, Venezuela, Switzerland, Taiwan, Italy and El Salvador - stands out his triumph in the Centrocaribes with the additional pressure of the injury of the favorite Olympic medalist Maykel Massó.

He also triumphed in the Taiwan Open (8.13) and in the ALBA Games (Venezuela, 7.87), and was second in the rallies in Bern and Geneva (Switzerland), in both cases with records over 8 meters.

Iván Izaguirre's student also flew this year up to 8.30 in a confrontation test at the Pan American Stadium in eastern Havana, although the mark could not be homologated due to the existence of wind above the permissible (2.0m/s).

"It is a great achievement with my age to be able to participate in a senior world championship. I am physically and mentally well and very motivated. I have faith in being able to be in the final," he added and declared himself an admirer of Massó, his teammate who recently underwent surgery.

"Cuban show jumping has always had a tradition. It has been at the top with great jumpers like Iván Pedroso, Juan Miguel Echevarría and Massó. I try to follow their path, their legacy. With effort, discipline, sacrifice and perseverance I believe the results can come out," he stressed.

For his coach, Parada shows a "good technical development" for his young age and stands out for his "level of concentration and dedication" in each competition.

"He is one of the talents that Cuban athletics has today. In the flying phase he performs a difficult technique of two and a half (steps)," Izaguirre added and recalled that it is the same used by Pedroso, Juan Miguel, Massó and Ibrahim Camejo, all Olympic medalists.

The long jump is one of the most awarded specialties of Cuban athletics in outdoor world championships with seven medals and the one that has won the most gold medals (4), all of them by Pedroso.

In Budapest will be present all the current top figures, led by Indians Jeswin Aldrin (8.42) and Sreeshankar (8.41), both students of Cuban Yoandry Betanzos. Also Taiwan's Tang Lin (8.40) and Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece (8.38).

The qualifying phase will be held on Wednesday, August 23 and the grand final one day later.

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