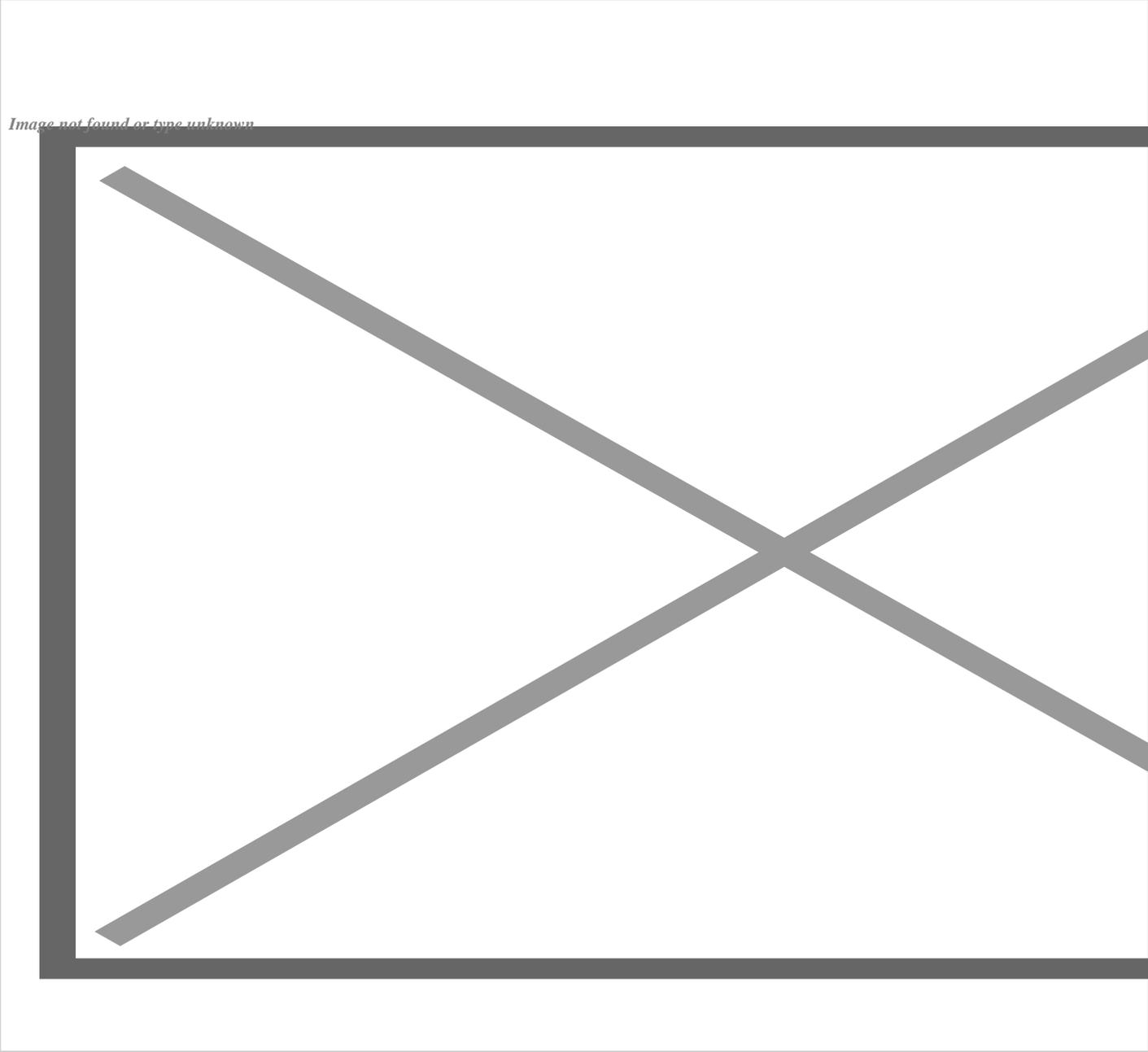


# *Cuban boxing flagship arms for its future*

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Paris, September 19 (PL) - Called the flagship of Cuban sports because of its results, boxing is working to guarantee that condition, with many young fighters with quality, said the president of the Cuban Boxing Federation, Alberto Puig.

In an exclusive dialogue with Prensa Latina, the experienced executive highlighted the ongoing renewal process of a squad that widely leads the medal table in world championships, with more than 80 titles,

and is second in the Olympic medals (41 golds), but since the Munich-1972 games, it clearly leads the count of gold medals.

This could be a challenging Olympic cycle, but our work is also aimed at guaranteeing the future, and we can say that we currently have many youngsters with a similar level of quality in the national pre-selection, which explains the rivalry and our possibilities of choosing boxers for the main events, he stressed.

These days the team is in a training base in the city of Tremblay-en-France, with seven men and three women, thanks to a project of the Cuba Coopération France (CubaCoop) association, which he thanked for its support and its willingness to accompany the Cuban sports movement in the face of the limitations imposed by the U.S. blockade.

According to Puig, the athletes who are preparing on French soil are shaping up to be the Antillean representation in the Pan American Games in Santiago, which will kick off in the Chilean capital on October 20.

Four fighters are training in Tremblay-en-France and will be making their debut in the regional tournament, in which Julio Cesar La Cruz (92 kilograms), Arlen Lopez (80) and Lazaro Alvarez (63.5) will be competing again.

La Cruz, the captain of the squad, two-time Olympic and five-time world champion, and Alvarez, three-time world champion and multiple Olympic medalist, would seek their fourth Pan American crown in Chile, while Lopez, also a double winner under the five rings, would compete for his third continental gold medal.

Youth and less experience do not mean that they lack level and winning options, since of the four eventual debutants, three won medals at this year's world championship in Tashkent: the silver medals of Saidel Horta (57 kilograms) and Fernando Arzola (over 92) and the bronze of Alejandro Claro (51).

Regarding the forecasts for the upcoming Pan American Games, the president of the Federation preferred not to be categorical, because any analysis involves considering a draw that will not "seed" the top figures by division, and they could face each other in the opening rounds.

Boxing in the continent has taken off, we see Colombia and Brazil, also the individualities of the Dominican Republic and Mexico, among other countries, progress in which we must mention the contribution of Cuban trainers, without forgetting the tradition of the United States, he said.

Puig also celebrated the progress of women's boxing on the island, after its recent incursion into the competitive scene.

We will go with three girls to the Pan American Games, and we can predict that we will also be a power among women, he added.

In that sense, he said that female boxers have begun to enroll in the Cuban sports system in early categories, from 15-16 years of age.

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