

Unprecedented silver medal for Andy Pereira in Pan American table tennis

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Havana, November 3 (JIT)-- Andy Pereira reserved his place among the greats of table tennis in the continent with his silver medal in the individual competition of the XIX Pan American Games, the first with that value for a Cuban in these competitions.

If before that result many placed him among the best of the Island, from now on nobody will forget to mention him. Since his precocious debut in international competitions -Central Caribbean Games of Cartagena 2006- he has not stopped making history. He scored the first victory of a Cuban in the Olympic

Games and here he explored a territory unknown to his predecessors.

"This is something historic. It's the greatest thing I've ever achieved in table tennis," he confessed proudly, despite the adverse scores of 3-11, 8-11, 5-11 and 4-11, which put the Brazilian favorite Hugo Calderano on top for the third time in a row.

"I went out to give my all, as in every match, but it became very difficult. Hugo is the number four player in the world, but I didn't compete alone against him. To reach the final I had to beat three others who have been among the top 10 in the world," assured Andy, who will return home as champion of the men's doubles alongside his partner Jorge Moises Campos.

The 34-year-old Havana native accepted every praise and congratulations after his most recent foray at the Olympic Training Center, where he will return for the team event in search of another good result.

"What we have achieved is due to the unity of our team, the support of the federation and Inder. Everything has come together to make this dream we are living come true," acknowledged the man who until recently thought that the crown at the XXIV Central American and Caribbean Games of San Salvador 2023 would be the best of his season.

After the tension of the finals, he is grateful to life for the fact that he made a mistake.

ON THE ROAD TO GLORY

If it was exciting for Andy to discuss a final, he enjoyed even more the road he traveled to reach the transcendental moment. Proof of this was his liberating shout, which shook the room, when he overcame the Canadian Eugene Wang in the semifinals on Wednesday.

Victories in the three previous duels, including the one in Lima 2019, underpinned the northern player's options. However, the Cuban mentally annulled those numbers, put each ball in the right place, got the tactics right to "move" his opponent and each decision did a lot of damage.

"I came out determined, I believed it and managed to open him to his right and that worked out very well. I moved his angles to make his defense more difficult," he said after that performance.

Only one detail gave him away. In his eyes was the gleam of emotion, the one with which he was contained during the four sets, released once the goal was accomplished.

Andy won the first three sets with slates of 11-8, 11-5 and 11-9. Then he gave up 7-11 and with that the ghosts of the Peruvian capital began to flutter, when Wang managed to come back from a similar advantage.

To top off the uncertainty, the Canadian put a three-point difference at the end of the fifth set. It was the Cuban's most sublime moment, he resurfaced the image of his best moments, erasing both the distance before achieving the tie at 10. Wang found no answers to stop him and capitulated 10-12.

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