

Rose Mary Almanza: Award for perseverance, never giving up

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Havana, May 26 (RHC) .- She will not be one of the world's great runners in the 800. But if there were a prize for perseverance, the Cuban Rose Mary Almanza would be a medalist.

At 31 years old, she just ran on Sunday at the Forbach Meeting (France) 1.58.89 (SB), well below the 1.59.30 required by World Athletics (WA) to seal her ticket to Paris-2024 .

The girl from Camagüey, a student of Cuban professor Nelson Gutiérrez (she lives in Ecuador), has not been able to shine in three previous events under the five rings: "I hope the fourth time is the charm"

It will be her fourth Olympic Games. Likewise, she read well. It sounds easy, but those who have ever devoured kilometers under a stinging sun and stifling heat know that staying in the elite for more than a decade requires a monumental effort.

And more so, if we know that the path of the world champion with the 4x400 in Silesia 2021, university world champion and multiple regional champion, has been hard, sometimes even rocky.

Some have wanted to look at her in the mirror of Ana Fidelia, Zulia, Yeya... But in sport only one can be the champion. For Almanza, even being taken into account was difficult. A decade ago, Cuban athletics had several prominent figures, and to go to Europe you had to show that you could be among the elite. And Almanza showed it. But if arriving was difficult, staying has been a dilemma, interspersed with some notable performances.

The athletics family has always expected more from her. And to a certain extent it is logical. If you run 1.56.28 you are among the best in the world, and you must be counted on in any scenario. But the 800m is not just running against the clock, but pure tactics, a sometimes fickle race. And at zero hour the willful athlete has sometimes not been able to.

But, no matter how bitter the drinks have been, she has continued to fight, overcoming obstacles, disappointments, changing coaches. When they almost didn't count on her, she tried her luck away from her own, first with Professor Francisco Ayala (Guatemala) and then with Nelson Gutiérrez (Ecuador). And she's still there.

We have never been able to see her in an Olympic final. She was once close to her, but "close" doesn't go into the books.

Her steely will has earned her admiration, sympathy. The phenomenal Marileidy Paulino, with whom she maintains a beautiful friendship, has baptized her as "the tough one." And this Sunday, the Dominican was one of the first to congratulate the tough woman, when she wrote on social media, "keep believing."

I once titled: "When second parts are also good." In a short time that athlete became a figure in her sport.

Today, less than two months before Paris-2024, she comes up with the headline: "I hope the fourth time is the charm."

Almanza is one of those athletes who, despite disappointments and adversities, never give up.

Almanza participations in the Olympic Games

London 2012 6th in the semi-finals

Rio 2016 3rd in its heat

Tokyo 2020 (2021) 4th in the semifinals

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