

# *Rafael Alba, America's best taekwondoka in 2024*

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**Rafael Alba**

Havana, Nov 26 (JIT) - Rafael Alba, double world champion and Olympic medalist, was honored as the Best Male Kyorugui Athlete at the annual gala of the Pan American Taekwondo Union (Patu), held in Queretaro, Mexico.

“It is a great honor to receive this distinction,” expressed the Cuban to JIT. Alba, is one of the American taekwondo stars with three participations in the Olympic Games 2016, 2020, and 2024, and bronze medals in Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 in the +80 kg category. He is also a two-time world champion (2013 and 2019).

Alba shared the recognition with Brazilian Edival Ponte, also a bronze winner in the -68 kg category at the event under the five rings in the City of Light.

In the women's category, the distinction went to Canadian Skylar Park (-57 kg) and American Kristina Teachout (-67 kg), bronze medalists in the French capital.

The Cuban Taekwondo Federation was also awarded the Sports Excellence Award. "This recognition commits us to increase the effectiveness of our work to remain among the elite of world sport," said Ivan Fernandez Quiros, president of the entity.

Cuba's women's national team coach, Arlen Gonzalez, attended the gala, where they shared knowledge with other American martial arts exponents, along with Alba and Fernandez.

The gala, presided over by Juan Manuel Lopez, president of Patu, celebrated the outstanding achievements of federations, athletes, referees, and coaches in different categories, highlighting the spirit and excellence of the sport in the continent. "This year, in Querétaro, we are excited to share an unforgettable night. Each award represents the effort and commitment of all our members," said López.

Cuba's recognition summarizes a successful year, recently crowned with Juana Irene González from Granma's bronze medal in the 60 kg division at the VI Pan American Deaf Games of Canoas 2024 in Brazil.

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