

# *Cuba's Juan Miguel Echevarría to return to the track after three and a half years of absence*

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Havana, January 21 (RHC)-- Cuban Juan Miguel Echevarría, world champion and Olympic runner-up in long jump, will return to the track next Sunday at a meeting in Portugal, three and a half years after his last appearance in Tokyo-2020. Echevarría, 26 years old, will reappear at the Moniz Pereira Athletics Meeting in Pombal (Portugal), the competition website reported and several specialized sites immediately echoed it.

“The long jump sensation is back. He will return after almost 4 years,” said Jumper World on his Instagram profile, with an image of the so-called “Black Panther” in full action.

With a personal best of 8.68m, Echevarría became one of the most media-friendly athletes in the world a few years ago and experts pointed to him as the man who could beat Mike Powell's world record of 8.95. On two occasions he even flew beyond 8.80, although with a slight tailwind.

Between 2018 and 2021 he captured the spotlight in every appearance in the diving box, and was crowned world indoor champion in Birmingham-2018, at just 19 years old, becoming the youngest world champion in the specialty.

He was then hit by several injuries, although he always recovered and continued to shine with the Olympic subtitle in Tokyo-2020 (2021), the bronze at the Doha-2019 outdoor World Cup, and first places in the Diamond League and the Pan American Games in Lima (both that same year).

In 2022, he requested to leave the Cuban athletics team citing personal reasons. A year later, he signed for a club in Portugal and in April 2024, he joined the Pedroso team in Guadalajara, Spain, where he shared training sessions with Olympic champions Yulimar Rojas and Jordan Díaz.

Although the Cuban athletics authorities gave him the go-ahead to rejoin the team at that time, Echevarría was unable to qualify for the Paris Olympic Games, as he did not appear in any competition.

His return is seen as an incentive for Cuban athletics, which in recent years has been far from its glory days, when stars such as Javier Sotomayor, Iván Pedroso, Ana Fidelia Quiros, Olisdeylis Menéndez, Yipsi Moreno and others shone bright.

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<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/deportes/374649-cubas-juan-miguel-echevarria-to-return-to-the-track-after-three-and-a-half-years-of-absence>



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