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Andy Cruz: I will not Let my People Down with My Fists

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Saying out loud Andy Cruz (August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995) in the boxing world is to speak about one of the best boxers pound by pound worldwide. At his 24 years old, from Matanzas he climbs up on the ring he is a very joyful young man, who speaks with a peculiar accent and earns everyone's favor.

It is just like this that we start the interview with the best sportsman of the year in Cuba and this reporter, after he flattered athlete Yorgelis Rodríguez, in an atmosphere of happiness and celebration:

**From Rookie of the year to Best sportsman in Cuba, did something change from one year to another?**

"I think nothing changed. I simply kept my levels of training, the same desires to win, the same energy to keep and improve my results. Thanks God everything came together and I am giving my people a great joy, my family, and followers of Alacranes who have always been faithful to me. That shows that the sacrifice has not been in vain. I plan to keep giving moments of happiness to our people that is so demanding and expert on sports. So there is plenty of Andy for a while."

**What is the secret behind Andy's training to stay at such excellent level for more than three years now?**

"The trainings, discipline, commitment and the desire to keep going. That winning spirit, the need of success. While I'm boxing I adapt to the fight as it comes. Close, medium or long distance. My extremities and being a bit taller for the 64 kg gives me an edge in the medium and long distance, but my favorite style is counter attack. That's when I get advantage over my opponents."

They say repetition is the mother of teaching. When you train hard one element, the time comes when you put into practice, or just flows naturally on its own. The jab is one of my main weapons, although I usually combine it with uppercuts and swings looking for effective combinations".

**Is there any exercise you prioritize during trainings and sparring in The Farm?**

"Solo work at the end of each session is crucial. Running and the jumping rope are among my favorite exercises, as well as rope climbing. I try to keep at the same level the mobility and strength of my punching, because it's a division where you can feel the force behind the punches.

If you face opponents and they don't your punches, it's like you are doing nothing.

I think sparring with Julio Cesar La Cruz, Lázaro Álvarez, and Roniel Iglesias are quite useful for me. Each has their peculiar fighting style, I take advantage of them and they make me a better and more complete boxer. I always try to follow coach's instructions to the letter and so far it has paid off.

Many people believe that my style is similar to that of Julio, that's true to a point: I like dodging to avoid getting punched when I attack. Partly because of my mother who is my number one fan and sometimes she doesn't watch my difficult combats because she doesn't like to see me hit, and for the stress that cause her".

Andy won in the World Championship of Boxing, competition where he stretched his win streak to 16, since he debuted in February 2015 against Mexican Brian González.

His boxing put him on the top of the ranking by divisions of the tournament, after defeating 2-1 the Kazakh Dilmurat Mizhitov in the final match.

He attained the same position in the 64 kg of AIBA, where with 1 700 points he looks in the rearview the Uzbek Ikboljon Kholdarov and Fazliddin Gaibnazarov (1 300), their closest chasers. He finished his impressive year with the gold medal in the Chemistry World Cup of Halle.

The Matador, as he is known in The Farm will have his last exam of 2018 in the Playa Giron Tournament, home based in Camagüey, where the main representatives boxers of the country will be. For this bold boxer who began at age 10 in boxing after a brief pass through karate these 12 months are a middle stop to glory, because he still thinks about the possibility of the Olympic gold medal in Tokyo 2020, and that is where he is aiming his fists.

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