
From Lima to Havana: Exhaustive Analysis and Encouraging Future

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The 18th Pan American Games Lima 2019 are all in the past. They were a resounding success, full of extreme competitiveness, deeds, tears, and glory; a marvelous host city in every single sense.

Le crème de la crème of sports in America competed in Lima. More than one hundred Olympic champions attended the sports event. Hundreds of world championship medalists...new talents, etc...Nobody wanted to miss Lima 2019.

Cuba was there amid such brilliance. This time, the delegation ended fifth (33-27-38). The total of gold medals was not so low since the Pan American Games held in Cali in 1971 —where we ended in second place.

The truth is the sports arena is now quite different to that of the last years of the 20th century when Cuba, after reigning the Pan American Games held in Havana in 1991, experienced its glory days behind the United States.

From Santo Domingo 2003 (72-41-39) to date, the tendency in performance and results —not only in gold medals— has dropped: Rio de Janeiro 2007 (59-35-41), Guadalajara 2011 (58-35-43), and Toronto 2015 (36-27-34).

Many variables have influenced this performance and we are going to mention some. But before, let's see what occurred in Lima 2019.

The goal was to outperform Toronto 2015 and consequently, to improve that fourth place. Now, the U.S., Brazil, Mexico, and Canada ended ahead of us this time. To achieve these goals, we had had to earn 38 titles, five more than the actual result.

At first sight, many will dive into some sports disciplines that underachieved such as taekwondo, weightlifting, artistic gymnastics, cycling, baseball, wrestling, and judo despite its five gold medals.

And that is a reality.

For example, track and field achieved 18 gold medals in Guadalajara 2011. Meanwhile, Toronto 2015 and Lima 2019 just contributed with 5 gold medals.

There is one irrefutable reason. Sports have become a very lucrative activity. And consequently, the amount of money invested in its development by every nation is increasingly higher, especially in infrastructure, state-of-the-art technology, coach hiring, counseling or highly skilled personnel, as well as the talent drain.

Having this picture into account, Cuba has tried hard to maintain its sports power status that once boasted. But it is like going against the tide as we have lost the opportunity to develop quality training camps that we used to carry out especially with the former Soviet Union and other former socialist countries.

Hence, Cuba has challenged the economic shortage to maintain one of the Revolution's greatest achievement. And such sustainability relies heavily on an evolutionary pyramid that starts on the early stage of sports fundamentals clinging on the ideals of Sports for All, the increasingly vanishing of sports facilities, special areas to practice, meticulous recruitment processes, mountain Olympiads...to name a few.

As a self-preservation method, our nation has turned to a strategy that follows the will of the country, not only to make profits in the exports of goods and services, but also with the goal of cooperating and contributing with the development of third world countries as a strong expression of solidarity of the Cuban people.

That is why it was easy to see some outstanding athletes like Yulimar Rojas, Aline Ferreira, and Albaro Rudesindo being trained by Cuban coaches.

We are referring to sports disciplines such as track and field, judo, wrestling, boxing, taekwondo, weightlifting...

We witnessed a new generation of talented athletes in Lima.

Adriana Rodríguez, Vanessa Godínez, Reinieris Andreu, Luis Enrique Zayas, Yusneylys Guzmán, Luis Manuel Lauret. Eliani Cámara, Gretel Mendoza, Alejandro y Huber, Elisabeth Gámez, Osvel Caballero, Mahyvianet Borges...all of them managed to crown endless days of hard training, sacrifice, to win their medals. Even better, the future looks bright right now.

The Pan American Games Lima 2019 resulted in a disappointed event. It is true all of our athletes did their best. However, some did not perform well in the clutch time.

Let's avoid at all costs our nation enters into an extended decline. Other events await.

Let's do everything humanly possible. Tokyo 2020 is right around the corner

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