
Cuban Judo: Iván Silva's 2019

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Iván Silva is a very ambitious young man. He is focused, but above all, he is well aware he must continue to improve his performance in the judo's 90 kg division if he wants to win a medal in Tokyo 2020.

Born in Matanzas on January 8, 1996, and forged after rough combats against Asley González, he is looking now to become an elite judoka after winning the silver medal in the 2018 World Championship.

A propos of his 2019 season, Julio Alderete's pupil (36 W- 12 L), talked to CubaSí:

"After my gold medal in the Pan American Games Lima 2019, I had just one week to train for the World Championship. My goal was to win a medal, but I could not meet my goal due to some setbacks. Hence, I ended seventh.

Afterwards, I managed to be runner-up in the Grand Slam held in Brazil, my best result in the second stage of my competitive roadmap of the season. The rest of the season, I always lost in the second round.

I personally believe that I was tired, and the training plan was focused on winning that gold medal in Lima. Indeed, there are now strong opponents in my division. For instance, several world champions lost in Qingdao's (Master) first round," detailed the already qualified for Tokyo 2020 according to his world ranking (3th- 4.423 points).

Broaden his technical repertoire...

"You must always look for improvements in your combat planning. The workload contributes to personal development. I even train with colleagues of a higher division (100 kg). That is where I am right now. It is not old-fashioned at all, but nonetheless we make the necessary adjustments to broaden my repertoire. This season I have felt more confident as I learned hip, leg, and *uchi-mata* techniques. Besides, I have learned how to handle my combats better.

In today's judo, and combat sports in general, you must have an ace up your sleeves. A lot of evaluation of opponents is carried out these days. They watch all my combats on video. Hence, it is paramount to have set some strategies that may help to win a fight in the end.

The 90 kg is a very balanced division. How is Silva dealing with such reality?

"It is something I bear in mind. I can even face a strong opponent in the first round of any tournament who may well be a world medalist. So every international tournament is now a challenge."

Are you pleased with your 2019 season?

"I am not pleased as I can always perform better. I am actually an ambitious man. A staff of trainers, physicians, colleagues, all of us have worked hard this year. Regarding the emotional aspect, I stay always positive aiming at major goals, but I rather stay focused on winning a medal."

What are the prospects of judo in general?

"I think the first goal is, for every Cuban judoka, to qualify for the Olympics. Once they are in, the goal is even clearer: to advance in the competition as far as possible to win a medal. The training is being quite hard. In Rio 2016, Cuba's men judo won no medals and that is the challenge we must target.

The 2020 season should kick off with the traditional European tour as we look to strengthening and rising positions (in the world ranking). Before, I would like to wish all the best to the Cuban people and ask them to trust Cuban judo. We always go out there to do our best," pointed out the judoka who from 2013 to date, according to www.judoinside.com, boasts a 68.5% winning percentage in all international competitions.

With a strong mind like an *ippon*, let's trust he will accomplish his goal.

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