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**Cuba: Women's Judo Team Reaches Top Competition**

19/10/2017



“Our aim is for the whole team to qualify for next year’s regional competition,” said Felix Portuondo, head coach of the women’s team.

The women’s judo team of Cuba has reached the Barranquilla 2018 Central American and Caribbean Games, which is scheduled to take place from Oct. 28-29.

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“Our aim is for the whole team to qualify for next year’s regional competition,” said Felix Portuondo, head coach of the women’s team. He stressed that Cuba’s main contender in the tournament will be Mexico, according to Granma.

“Yanisleidys Ponciano from Havana will be competing in the 44kg division, a tough athlete with a strong chance of making it to the final. World Championship medal winner Melissa Hurtado will represent Cuba in the 48kg. Her main rival will be Pan American Games silver medalist Edna Carrillo of Mexico.”

Portuondo conceded that Hurtado appeared “a lot stronger” during her training

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sessions in Budapest.

Also participating in the competition will be Yurisleidi Hernandez. Portuondo commented that Mexican judoka Luz Olvera, a gold recipient in the Cancun's Grand Prix and silver at the Pan-Am Championships, will be her main rival. Despite stiff competition posed by Olvera, Portuondo exalted Hernandez's high-level of discipline and training routine, saying that such qualities are a winning combination.

Anailys Dorvigni, yet another member of Cuba's women judoka team who participated in Budapest, will take to the tatami in the Dominican Republic. She's scheduled to fight against Germany's Miryam Roper who is ranked fourth in the world.

"Maylin del Toro is competing in the 63kg, and it shouldn't be too difficult for her to win gold," Portuondo said.

However, he concluded that Olga MASFERRER, from Holguin, "will face stiff competition in the 70kg."

"This is the hardest weight group to predict, and will feature Colombia's Yuri Alvear - bronze medal winner in Budapest and ranked second in the world; Elvismar Rodríguez of Venezuela, number three in the global ranking; and María Pérez of Puerto Rico, current World silver medalist."

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