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Cuba modifies Olympic schedule due to new coronavirus

By: Fausto Triana  
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Reality overcomes fiction and in light of the pandemic of the new coronavirus, Cuba has decided to modify its Olympic schedule immediately and be optimistic about the future of sports.

Less than three months ago, the Cuban sports movement was, as in most countries of the world, immersed in predictions, preparations, training and many dreams about the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020.

A nightmare or a severe challenge for humanity, the only viable option on the table is to turn the page and be confident in science, as inferred by the statement by Roberto Ramirez, Communications director of the Cuban Sports and Recreation Institute (INDER).

In an exclusive interview with Prensa Latina, the experienced journalist underlined that postponing the Olympic Games in Japan for 2021 will imply a reconfiguration of the entire structure of sports and the very structure of athletic activities.

'It is a big challenge, even if the postponement of the event was evident. Our technicians and specialists now have the task of reordering the entire puzzle, because we are not only speaking about the Games,' he noted.

Ramirez, who has covered six Olympics, noted the coincidence in previously scheduled competitions like the first continental Youth Games in 2021 and the qualifiers for the Central American and Caribbean Games in Panama in 2022.

However, he expressed confidence in the strength of the human material necessary with sports research centers, experts in high performance, 'and I can assure categorically that the variants to face these challenges are on the table'.

Ramirez told Prensa Latina that in the first place, we will have to wait for the normalization of the international situation and Cuba's sports events, in addition to the final decisions by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the international federations, to see if they adjust to the regional schedule, in the Americas in general and in Central America and the Caribbean particularly.

Seen from a realistic approach, the best thing that could have happened is that the Olympics were postponed, because even with the strongest efforts, the quality of the Games would not be the same and their image would be tarnished, he pointed out.

Regarding the near future, Ramirez wondered if calling them Tokyo 2020 Games would mean that the regular cycle will be respected and that the Paris Games will be held in 2024, or if the situation will have to be analyzed from creative and new approaches.

After negotiations and lobbying, the IOC and Japan reached an agreement on March 24 to postpone the Olympic Games, scheduled for this summer in Tokyo. No definite date has been set yet.