
Arlenis Sierra: Antillean Power on Wheels at any Level

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When cyclist Arlenis Sierra first entered the elite of road cycling, at least in the Western hemisphere with her medal in the Pan-American Games of Guadalajara, Mexico 2011, not many people thought that the girl from Manzanillo, born on December 7, 1992 would achieve through sheer pedaling be one of the best road cyclist worldwide today.

She has at present joined the new politics of overseas recruiting for Cuban sportsmen, the member of the prestigious club Astana Women's Team Kazakh. She treasures among her more praiseworthy yields of 2017 that she finished tenth in the general classification in the Italy Tour. This also won her to enter the top ten list of the best athletes of the year in Cuba in 2017.

Year 2017?

"A very important year in the road, I achieved results that we thought impossible, among other things by ignorance and lack of competition against cyclist of that level. I cannot minimize the world medal of 2016 in the track, and the two medals of the Pan-American championship.

I honestly fell off the bicycle at the end, but that is an always present risk in our sport. I have been given the chance to renovate contract with Astana and I'd like at least to repeat the yields achieved in 2017.

After so many negative outcomes there must be something good coming afterwards and that is my drive starting from January in each training session, because in February I resume the competitive season".

Actually a lesion prevented you from attending the road world championship when you were at your best. What happened? Tell me about your experience in this first year with the club?

"Lesions and setbacks are there. I was competing in the Pan-American Games and I fell. That kept me from attending the Road World Championship, a competition I have not experienced. As for the Club, life dynamics is

not so complicated. I live home alone, and I join the other girls prior an important competition.

Despite not living together 100% of the time we get along quite well among team members. As for being my first year I can say that adaptation was positive in many ways."

You finished tenth in the Italy Tour, one of the strongest of the planet. Can you tell us about the competition and what you felt competing against top-class cyclists?

"That was a quite surprising outcome although the first day when I was in the team competition I was a little behind. Individual races helped me to climb positions little by little. I didn't plan to finish among the first ten because there were almost 160 competitors, and it's a race that requires the hell of a strong will. In fact, I consider it the toughest I have run. Ten stages, each one with its difficulties."

What makes you a road cyclist?

"I don't know myself which is my strongest attribute. Sometimes I do a lot of sprints and I ascend normal, at times I invert the strategy. I believe that in the road I am really balanced, with a bit of each ingredient and that has helped me to ascend so far."

Do you plan to compete on the tracks in the Central American and the Caribbean Games of Barranquilla? Cuba has always been strong in there.

I'm not planning on leaving the tracks. I'll keep running the road for points, the scratch and some team event when necessary. I don't run individual pursuit, nor speed neither Omnium. Maybe be I'm not in the best shape to face the tracks, since I have to give priority to road events and the club's competitive chronogram starting in February, but I won't begin the training to face the track tests until April. The road will be something more normal. Between February and April I will almost have races every week. It will be very intense, but not impossible."

What was the best result in 2017? Were you surprised after being chosen among the best ten athletes of the year?

"Pretty surprised and somewhat contradictory. Every result is very important to me. If I don't win a medal and I finished fourth I always give my best. That is the secret for us, high-yield sportsmen. We are not always judged fairly, because sometimes only medals count, without knowing all that comprises a possible result. Last year I won a medal in the World Championship and I didn't have the honor of being among the best. God works in mysterious ways. I am really very happy of having been in that unique group."

I'd like to thank all those who have supported me, those who follow my career, and those who cheered me up when lesions set in, I even I thought that the last one was more complicated, a broken clavicle and shoulder, but luckily is not something that takes me a lot of rehab time, that is nothing serious. I'd specially like to thank my family, my people... "

What to expect of year 2018?

"First, with the luck of renovating my contract I want to win a medal in the Road World Cups, to participate again in the Tour of California, the Tour of Italy and to participate for the first time in the Tour de France for women."

Break the curse and join the World Championship of Road that seems excessively strong for bikers, since there is a stretch of two mountains of six kilometers and it ends with a mountain of nine kilometers. At least I want to live the experience. I cannot predict a result, but just as always I will pedal with all my might."

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