

OPINION: Cuban Canoeing with a Bright Future

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The brilliant performance of men's two-seat canoeing at Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was not by chance. We never doubted it.

However, the results in the recently concluded World Championship confirm what we all saw at the Japanese capital city: there is a bright future beyond the flagship of Cuban canoeing.

Both Serguei Torres and Fernando Dayán Jorge have competed at a very high level with other stars competitors in this sports discipline. That is why the Olympic gold medal was somehow a possibility. However, the Cuban Canoeing Federation has been working hard for years and hence, results are now coming to fruition.

The C-2 canoe has been traditionally the flagship of this sport discipline. But we now take an optimistic view to the performances of José Ramón Pelier in the men's single competition, who dreams to follow the star record left by stellar Ledis Frank Balceiro, and that is a pretty big talk.

Nonetheless, Pelier – 20 years old, born in the city of Guantanamo — has showed great skills and if he remains to being competitive and participates in a great deal of international competitions, we may actually enjoy outstanding performances as early as the Central American and the Caribbean Games.

But a couple of girls, Yarisleidis Cirilo and Katherin Nuevo, who also showed in Tokyo what both can do, brought the greatest joy these days. And now, both are now known in the canoeing world.

Copenhagen hosted the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championship. These girls won two medals, silver medal in the 200m C-2 competition and the bronze medal in 500m C-2 competition. These were the first two medals ever for Cuban women at any world competition.

It is fair to say that some of the best canoeists in the world did not participate in this World Championship as they decided to rest after the Olympic Games. But future stars of the discipline did participate. Therefore, results are really encouraging.

What happened in Denmark's Lake Bagsværd should mark a turning point in the sports career of Villa Clara native

Nuevo, who is only 18 years old, and Guantanamo native Cirilo, 19, without getting overly excited yet.

The fact that this is an elite sport discipline may contribute to these athletes' progressive development, as technical and economic efforts may be focused on them.

The goal is now to protect these talents and improve their skills as we have done in the last twenty years. A new generation has stepped up and results are still great in both our region and the world.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSi Translation Staff