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Destination Veracruz: Thread medals between touches, the needle in the haystack?

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Taymi Chappe, Rolando Tucker, Elvis Gregory, Ivan Trebejo, Miraida Garcia... Yamilka Rodríguez, Zuleidys Ortiz, Ringo Quintero, Daylon Díaz, "You are the glory", or rather you are, while so many other fencers, volleyball players, baseball players who regardless of the latitude in which they have excelled dignify to Cuba with their sporting performance.

Then, it would be fair to dedicate them the bolero composed by José Antonio Méndez.

And hard to admit it, but the Cuban fencing, as well as many sports disciplines, is far from its golden age, that in which the experienced Eduardo Jons managed to put three of his pupils (the mentioned Tucker and Gregory, as well as Oscar García in 1995) among the five champions of universal foil ranking.

It is not living on the memories, much less when we crossed home by a serious competitive empty space at the highest level: they just pass of ephemeral form by the Villa de La Habana and have access to the Pan American Championship, depending on the priorities and strategies drawn up with each mode.

In 2014 male fencing has earned with great effort participating in global competition, but that was only a small incentive, because it is estimated that in a year of acceptable confrontation a fencer must have at least one score of "Supreme" assaults.

This situation of scarcity translates into lack of costumes, quality sheets, electric tracks,

electronic whiteboards for marking, reels... in short, it is estimated that each athlete must individually face a competition of rigor with an endowment of five special sheets (each has an estimated cost of 50 euros on the international market). Add handle, footwear, clothing, and protectors for the women, the figure is approaching thousand euro.

In the 1990s the presence of our Musketeers star was required in tournaments by many of the universal powers (former members of the Socialist camp or not), which extended them invitations to participate, to size up against and calibrate their quality.

### **Veracruz: zero point**

Problems aside, the purpose of the National Commissioner, Rigoberto Morejon, is quite ambitious: for our 18 representatives will not be easy to achieve six of the 12 titles competing in fencing in the Central American Games and of the Caribbean from Veracruz, Mexico. What is real is that such performance would ensure them the scepter of a discipline that will enroll to 180 Musketeers, who will try to build dam touches to their rivals in the USBI from Xalapa, one of the Sub-venues of the contest.

Complete the Cuban delegation six coaches and two referees. Note that only the fencer Yamilka Rodríguez and the Sabre Daylon Díaz and Jennifer Morales have experience in Caribbean Centre competitions.

The endowment will be distributed in the individual events (each nation can enter two athletes) and team (three in each team) sword, foil, and Sabre, with Venezuela, Dominican Republic and hosts on quality of main opponents.

The last duel of rigor in the Centre Caribbean multi context sports took place in Cartagena de Indias 2006. There it emerged the might of our fencers (seven golds, four silvers and other so many bronzes) ahead of the morochos (5-5-7), who four years later, taking advantage of the absence of Cuba, virtually swept in Mayagüez 2010 (9-2-3) leaving only escape the scepters of the women's individual and team Sabre - were held in Dominican Republic-, and the men's foil, to the account of the Aztec Daniel Gómez.

From city of Panama 1970 - with the exception of San Salvador 2002 and Mayaguez 2010-, Cuba has managed to dominate the sport in Central American Games and of the Caribbean, argument that to some extent supports the prophecy, despite the distance in which Cuban fencers are if we talk about positions in the rankings of their respective weapons, in keeping with its almost zero presence in world cups and Grand Prix circuits.

Sharp outlook at the horizon

The silver medal achieved by the sabre Daylon Díaz in the Pan-American Festival in Mexico was a surprise. That is why we will move initially in this field, especially if we think of the bronzes of Ringo Quintero (individual) and next to his teammates Fidel Ferrer and Yunion Reytor in the continental event of Costa Rica.

Coach Jaïne Hernández, who began working in the combined elite in December 2010, has said about his disciples: "the formula for success in the case of men's EPEE has been the improvement of three elements: the stature (1.92 meters), because the scope is most influential in relation to the rest of the weapons; the technical level and individual effectiveness.

"Pre-selected athletes have high parameters of explosiveness, certain psychological component, and I try to guide them, despite the lack of friction, by current trends. In this general stage, for example, we have three weekly visits to the Beach, make a transition to two or one in the special and combine it with races in hills, to enhance the strength of the force. So we have obtained results and we intend to discuss the gold both individually and by teams in Veracruz".

His counterpart Pedro Enríquez, with more than three decades of work, also made comments on the preparation and aspirations: "The pre-selected eight averaging 22 years and 1.75 meters tall, indicators in line with their peers in the elite. The best group is composed of Yamilka Rodríguez, the left-handed Ceily Mendoza, Marisol Oña and Yoslane Cardinal. The second group is composed of Yamelis González, Eliannis López, Gretel Carbonel and Bisel Franco, all in juvenile age.

"Without thinking of the first level - the average of the fencers with experience in the context of the Orb is greater than four stages of the Grand Prix circuit, continental events and world-, we have met our internal plan between 90 and 94%, with emphasis on the elements that characterize the sword, and that brings us to a little in the subsequent implementation of actions and movements in real situations where they can show their repertoire.

"The implementation of weekly internal controls with the presence of their male counterparts and athletes of pentathlon has been of great help, especially with the first, by the difference in the size (1.92 per 1.75), speed and responsiveness with respect to our preset. Simulation work and the physical volume are two important issues."

Jons spoke about his male foil pupils, somewhat more rugged because their results are now a step below the sword and Sabre: "We have a very young selection (1.76 meters of height and 21 years), without ranking points and international competitions except the Villa de La Habana. They are Reuben Jay, Michel Carthy, Jesús Delgado, Leandro Ramos, Enmanuel Mojena and Jesús Riaño".

"Individual effort on the effectiveness of the touches is our priority, as well as in real-life combat situations offensive actions are far from what we pursue. Looking to Veracruz, our intention is to achieve both individual and team medals. The will and the spirit of combativeness of these boys is the fuel that has given me strength to continue working in the constant search for the rescue of a foil of quality".

"World Championships Budapest, Hungary (1991), and The Hague, Holland (1995), in both our men of foil team achieved medals." Olympic Games in Barcelona 1992, this silver medal, the Cuban Musketeers won 8-5 and finished equal with the Germans at eight. For all, it was a gold medal. In fact, we cherish it until the final touch. It was also the individual bronze of Gregory".

1997 Cape Town, gold of the fencer Miraida García before her teammate Zuleydis Ortiz. Both Jons and Enriquez celebrated those moments to the beat of "You are the glory".

Regardless of what happens in Mexico, surely the current heirs of the previous stellar Cuban fencers will increase group of medals in that sport in the Caribbean Centre context historical coffers, up to 90 medals of gold, 38 silver and 28 bronze, well above Venezuela (34-45-35) and Mexico (21-47-63), second and third in the historical accumulate.

Of course that will have to be careful of the fencers Silvio Fernández, Francisco Limardo... all capable of keeping of their steels other than the bolero Golden Melody.

