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### Cuban Boxing: Yesterday, or When It Is Not Enough

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You can give everything in each training session; forge your fist as a weapon of honor and your mind as a temple; you can have the best coaching staff at your disposal; you can keep your spirits at their highest at all times. But when the critical path is not completed, it is only logical that it will not be enough.

This was just the case at the first World Championship under the auspices of the newly created WorldBoxing, where our dream slipped away like sweat on a concrete floor.

Boxing itself is full of examples of young athletes who, despite not being favored, burst onto the main stage. Yet those instances should be the exception, not the rule.

The squad that traveled to Liverpool was made up of largely inexperienced fighters, and the failure to carry out the planned training camp before the competition proved disastrous for their results. At home you can spar and train as much as you want, but you need to face your rivals.

We are full of young men with fire in their eyes but wings weighed down; with more courage than miles in their legs, and more drive than experience in foreign rings. But with that alone, we can only aspire to flashes of brilliance in the shadows.

These athletes barely stepped into any ring this year other than those of La Finca or Camagüey, host of the Playa Girón tournament. When you have not yet experienced even one Olympic cycle, the cost is high—and this time, it was too heavy a toll.

For the first time, we return from a world championship without a single title—something that had never happened in more than 20 previous editions. We had to settle for three bronze medals, very commendable in each case, given their specific circumstances.

Alejandro Claro (50 kg) once again showed that what he lacks is just *a touch more boiling point* to reach glory.

Erislandy Álvarez managed to remain among the elite after peaking in 2024. And Julio César La Cruz confirmed that, despite his advanced age, he still has what it takes to fight at a high level, in whichever weight class he is placed.

But we cannot stop there. We cannot be satisfied. Cuban boxing has earned, through blood, sweat, and tears—literally—the logistical conditions needed to face any competition. We cannot rely solely on epic spirit.

The losses of the flagship of Cuban sports over the last decade have been significant, and situations like this only add fuel to the fire.

The sleepless nights and dedication of both the coaching staff and the boxers themselves deserve that extra effort so they can fight toe-to-toe with all rivals, and not arrive lacking competitive preparation.

Otherwise, it is not enough. And what is worse, demotivation is beginning to weigh heavily on our team, which currently survives as best it can in a demanding international context.

If not, then—paying homage to the city where we competed—we will be left singing of past glories with the *Yesterday* of the unforgettable quartet.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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