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Acebal Leaves with a Grudge

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi

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Rolando Acebal recently stepped down as head coach of Cuban boxing, and despite his outstanding results, he's left with a thorn in his side due to the poor performance at the 2023 Central American and Caribbean Games in San Salvador.

"We're preparing for that because we want to erase the thorn in our side from the last Games, and we plan to take a strong team there. We want to go and sweep the competition, to put it bluntly," he said exclusively to CubaSi.

The qualifying tournament will be held in March in Aguascalientes, Mexico, and there shouldn't be any problems qualifying the entire team.

"For San Salvador, we lost key players at the last minute and were under a lot of pressure. In some weights we even had to take not just a second-stringer, but a third-stringer, who wasn't ready yet."

In this regard, he referred to the inclusion of Caribbean boxers in professional fights, a way to prevent the exodus of talent.

"As you saw on the last professional matches, some young fighters were included, and that's very important because it's part of our work strategy—that is, gradually integrating the less experienced fighters into that competitive aspect that we so desperately need. In any case, it's not a traditional competition, but it's a significant number of rounds, very beneficial for the preparation of our athletes. This year, three World Cups and several international tournaments were held, and we weren't able to participate. The World Boxing Championship served as a way to identify and evaluate potential opponents." In this Olympic cycle, we need to give young fighters fights so they can gain experience. We lost all our bouts there by split decision, meaning we lost by small margins, and that's the tactical-competitive aspect."

Acebal also confirmed that the final phase of the National Series, which had to be suspended due to Hurricane Melissa, will take place at a later date.

“We need to box. It's also important to see the new talent from the provinces. There are always scouts there, new figures are always emerging, boxing always has some surprises in store, there's always someone you have to keep an eye on and follow.”

**And what about the veterans?**

“They're at the end of their careers. We want them to continue competing professionally to develop young fighters with potential for the next cycles and to renew the squad. They keep training, sharing their experience, and continue to contribute to the new generation.” That's important.”

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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