

Cuban heptathletes to Austria with sights set on Tokyo



Yorgelis Rodriguez and Adriana Rodriguez, travel to Europe on Monday

Havana, May 24 (RHC)-- Cuba's top heptathletes, Yorgelis Rodriguez and Adriana Rodriguez, travel to Europe on Monday to compete in the famed combined events meeting in Gotzis, Austria.

"It is a top-level competition and brings many points for the Olympic qualification, although we are going to take it as a preparatory," the coach of both athletes, Gabino Arzola, told Radio Havana Cuba.Havana.

Despite the remarkable quality of both Cuban athletics stars, Pan American champions and medalists in top-level events, they have not yet been able to seal their Olympic passport, mainly hit by affectations in their preparation due to Covid-19.

"They are training in shape little by little, they are very good athletes, disciplined," stressed Arzola when recalling that they restarted their preparation on March 3 with the objective of qualifying for Tokyo.

"We received the invitation to compete in Gotzis (May 29-30) and then we will do it here (in Havana) June 18-19, where we will close with a heptathlon with the goal of making the Olympic mark, which is very demanding," he commented.

In the heptathlon, the minimum mark for Tokyo is 6,420 points, a figure that no athlete has been able to reach so far this season. The 24 best heptathletes in the world qualify for Tokyo.

Arzola recalled that the first figures of the heptathlon in Cuba trained "very well" in a base in Portugal, at the end of 2020, but on their return to the island they were infected with Covid-19 and lost almost two months of preparation (from January 7 to March 3).

Last weekend, in a confrontation event held at the Pan American stadium in eastern Havana, both made their debut in individual events.

The greatest successes were for Adriana, 21 years old and Pan American champion in Lima-2019, who achieved personal bests in the 100 hurdles (13.01 sec) and shot put (13.30 m).

World U-20 runner-up in Bydgoszcz-2016, Adriana has a personal best of 6,304 points and is ranked 22nd in the new world ranking.

Meanwhile, Yorgelis, 26, queen at the Toronto-2015 continental games and bronze in pentathlon at the world indoor in Birmingham-2018, ran in 13.78 sec the 100m hurdles and sent the bullet to 14.16m. Her personal best in heptathlon is the Cuban record of 6742 points.

The also world under-20 champion Barcelona-2012 and seventh at the Rio-2016 Olympics, suffered a serious knee injury after her injury in Lima-2019 and has hardly competed since then.

"After competing in Gotzis we are returning to Cuba. We will not do stay in Europe. Qualification is difficult, but not impossible. We will bet everything on one shot (June 18-19 in Havana)," Arzola noted.

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