

Sotomayor and Fosbury -- luxury guests in tribute to Italian show high jump champion



Javier Sotomayor with Gianmarco Tamberi

Havana, October 10 (RHC)-- Cuba's Javier Sotomayor and American Dick Fosbury, two of the legends of the high jump, participated as special guests at the Sports Festival in Trento (Italy), which paid tribute to several Italian sports stars, among them the Tokyo Olympic champion in the high jump, Gianmarco Tamberi.

Sponsored by the popular Italian newspaper Gazzetta Dello Sport, the Festival was held from October 7 to 10 and featured live interviews with 200 sports personalities from some 100 disciplines, including several of Italy's medalists at the recent Tokyo-2020 Olympic Games.

Sotomayor, baptized as the Prince of Heights and world record holder in high jump (2.45), and Fosbury, creator of the backstroke style and Olympic champion in Mexico-68, were as luxury guests at the tribute to Tamberi and the three recounted their experiences in the discipline that led them to glory at different times.

"It was a very nice experience. I had a great time and I thank the Gazzetta for having me for another year," Sotomayor who was already at last year's Festival, at that time via online because of the pandemic, told Radio Habana Cuba from Italy.

The best high jumper in history told that during the interview they talked about the future of the high jump, Tamberi's quality, the possible candidates to beat his world record, the differences in styles among the three, despite the fact that they all jump backwards, and the unprecedented Olympic title shared between Tamberi and Qatar's Mutaz Barshim in Tokyo-2020. "I would have done the same. It was a nice gesture," assured the prodigy from the town of Limonar (Matanzas, in western Cuba).

"I don't know who can beat my record. There are many youngsters who could do it in the future and at one time the ones who came closest were Barshim and Bondarenko," he acknowledged. The Cuban also took the opportunity to thank for the first time the American Fosbury, since "thanks to his innovative style I was able to make my world records and reach 2.45", 28 years ago.

Meanwhile, Fosbury recalled his beginnings jumping backwards, in 1962 at the University - before that he used to jump from the front (barrel roll) -, a style that he gradually perfected until he reached perfection in 1968, when he was crowned Olympic champion.

Tamberi, for his part, showed his emotion at sharing with two high jump legends and recalled several passages of his career: "Me, sitting between Fosbury and Sotomayor. It doesn't seem real to me," said the 29-year-old Italian champion.

The Trento Festival in its second edition coincided with a historic year for Italy in the Olympic Games, in the Tokyo-2020 edition.

This Sunday, at the closing ceremony, Olympic 100m champion Marcell Jacobs and his golden 4x100m teammates took the floor, with the legendary Valery Borzov as guest of honor.

Other stars who have been on the microphones of the Gazzetta since last Thursday were the cyclist Fillipo Ganna, champion in Tokyo, and the gymnast Vanessa Ferrari, runner-up, stars of the past such as Yury Chechi (gymnastics), Francesca Piccinini (volleyball) and the soccer player Christian Vieri, all Italians, as well as the Cameroonian Samuel Eto'o (soccer) and the Slovenian Tadej Pogacar (cycling).

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