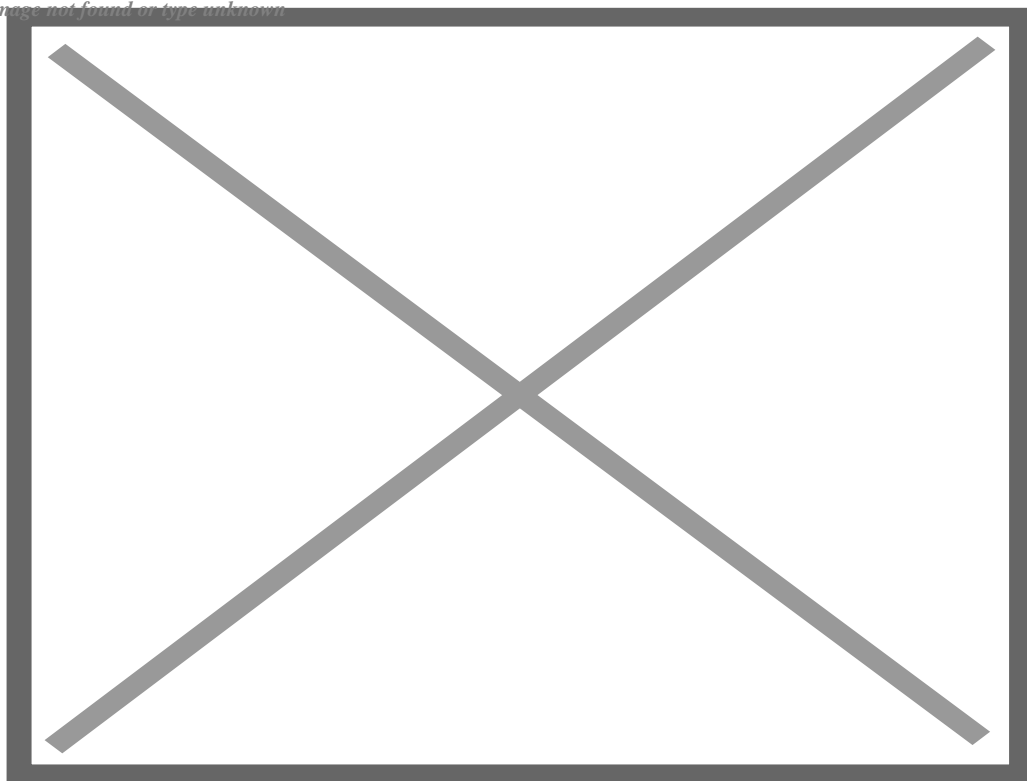


First group of athletes to Santiago 2023 return home to Havana

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Havana, October 27 (JIT) -- The first group of the Cuban delegation that participated in the XIX Pan American Games of Santiago 2023 returned to the homeland early Friday morning.

Leading the departure were gold medalists Leuris Pupo (shooting) and Arley Calderón (weightlifting), Cuba's first champions at these Games.

The group was received at José Martí International Airport by Inder's first vice president, Raúl Fornés Valenciano; the director of training and improvement, Yoselín Ramiro; the director of sports organization and programming, Agustín Abril; and the school's director, Reynier Olivera Matos.

"You have made the homeland vibrate, because those who did not get the metal medals, got the medal of courage, because many overcame their own results and set national records," said Fornés.

And he added that "all of them feel like champions of the Cuban people and of the homeland, they returned with the main medal, which was the medal of dignity, the one that Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz always asked of us and that is what makes Cubans proud".

"No matter the result, everyone contributed to the joy of our people and therefore everyone deserves the applause and recognition of the country's leadership and our organization," he added.

The first champion of the Island in the multisport festival, weightlifter Arley Calderon, representing the athletes, emphasized: "the Cuban delegation that participated in Santiago 2023 declares fulfilled the purpose of competing faithful to the tradition of struggle of our people, to whom we are grateful for the many signs of affection".

This segment of the Caribbean representation was made up of more than 106 people, including athletes, coaches and federation officials of weightlifting, shooting, swimming, diving, badminton, artistic gymnastics, rowing, racquetball, tennis and taekwondo.

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