

Granda: Four times for a golden judo team



Havana, November 1 (JIT) -- The performance of Cuban judo fighters at the XIX Pan American Games will have to be written between exclamation marks.

They arrived at Santiago 2023 with lesser figures, as some of them left the national team with their qualification in their hands, the team won five individual titles, the team tournament and a bronze medal.

The group victory this Tuesday at the Contact Sports Center located in the National Stadium Park of Chile, means surpassing in quality the metal trio achieved four years ago in Lima 2019 (5-2-5).

The team beat Mexico 4-1 in the quarterfinals, the Dominican Republic 4-2 in the semifinals and Brazil 4-3 in the final.

Each of these victories was followed by a defeat by no-show, due to the incompleteness of the team, so that on the tatami there were only three defeats.

World champion Andy Granda, who won all three matches and was also responsible for the definition in the tiebreaker, was the main protagonist. Twice he defeated the Brazilian star Rafael Silva by three shidos.

Idelannis Gómez (3-0) and Iván Silva (3-0) were also impeccable, while Idalys Ortiz closed with 1-1 after losing to the strong Brazilian Beatriz Souza, her victim this Monday in the quarterfinals of the individual event.

The most discreet of the team was Magdiel Estrada, with just one win in three trips to the tatami. Undoubtedly, the boy is going through a bad moment, which also led him to leave the individual competition without a medal.

"First I had to draw the match and then I concentrated on the possibility that the draw would indicate my division for the tiebreaker. It happened and I was ready to decide," commented Granda in a bustling interview area.

"This team didn't talk anything last night, we just by looking at each other we know what the task is: to win the gold for the people of Cuba. We prepared ourselves to enjoy the competition and get the result," he said before dedicating this triumph to his daughter and family in general, in addition to the people of Cuba.

The Brazilian has won medals at Olympic and world level, and is ahead of me in body weight. However, I have faced him several times and I feel more agile," he said about the challenge against Silva.

"I had very strong opponents, especially this Brazilian, but our strategy was clear and we went out to fulfill it. I feel very happy for this victory, which closes the 2023 season. I'm in great shape and ready for future competitions," Idelannis commented at first.

"I feel super satisfied with my performance here. I won all the bouts by ippon. This satisfaction expresses that we are on the right path thanks to the support of the work team. What can we say about the responsibility, we know that we carry on our backs an island that is waiting for our victories", said the young Guantanamera.

The bronze medals were won by the Dominican Republic and Colombia teams.

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