

# *Cuba for medals in Tashkent Judo World Championship*

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Havana, October 5 (JIT) - The World Judo Championship of Tashkent 2022, in Uzbekistan, which will take place from Thursday, represents for the Cubans the opportunity to redeem themselves for what happened in the previous edition and reach, at least, a medal.

In Budapest, Hungary, Cuba was left out of the medal standings for the first time since Jorge Fiss Castro won bronze in the open category in the edition held in the city of Essen in 1987.

Since then, they have won at least one medal in 20 competitions, with the top medal at the 24th edition held in Birmingham, United Kingdom, in 1999.

In the British tournament they reached the second place by countries with four gold medals, the highest number obtained by Cuba at this level, in addition to two silver medals and an equal number of bronze medals.

For the Caribbean athletes, the top of the podium has eluded them since Idalis Ortiz, in the +78 kg division, managed to beat Brazil's Maria Altheman in the final in the XXXIV version held in Chelyabinsk, Russia, in 2014.

That title acquired high significance considering that it served Cuba to tie with the South American Giant in third place in the medal standings with 1-1-2. Since that occasion, the delegations from the Greater Antilles have been off the podium.

Precisely in this event, one of the greatest hopes of winning prizes lies with the native of Candelaria, who has an enviable record in world tournaments with eight medals: two gold, two silver and four bronze.

The second place obtained in the Hungarian grand slam last July indicates that this is possible for the most successful Cuban, although she dreams of a third crown to match the stellar Driulis Gonzalez.

The women's team is completed with four other members, among which stands out Kaliema Antomarchi (-78 kg), who although she did not have the best results in the European tour has already hung a bronze metal in these lides in Budapest, Hungary, in 2017.

Maylín del Toro (-63 kg) also has World Cup experience, with a fifth place as her best finish. She comes to this event with a third place in the grand slam in Hungary in 2022.

In -57 kg Cuba's representative will be Arnaes Odelín and in -52 kg the other debutant, Melissa Hurtado, who won the Oberwart 2022 European Judo Open, in Austria, just a month ago. Both of them come to the world championship after an extensive training tour in Europe under the command of Yordanis Arencibia.

Among the men, the forecasts point to Ivan Silva in -90 kg as the Cuban with the best chances of winning a metal in Tashkent.

Fourth in the ranking of his division, even ahead of Japan's Murao Sanshiro, he presents as credentials this year the podiums achieved in the grand slams of Tel Aviv, Hungary and Antalya. He won the latter.

Accompanying the silver medalist in Baku 2018 will be other experienced athletes such as Magdiel Estrada, second place in the grand slam of Zagreb 2022 in -73 kg, and the +100 kg Andy Granda, who reached the podium in Oberwart and Antalya this year. However, they have not achieved greater success in intercontinental events.

The delegation is completed with a trio of promising youngsters who are already starting to show results in the international arena. The talented Kimy Bravo in -66 kg, who is recovering from some viral processes suffered recently, will not be present this time.

Orlando Polanco will compete in that division, accompanied by Danny Porte in -60 kg and Omar Cruz in +100 kg, who in 2022 was runner-up in the world youth championship in Guayaquil, Ecuador. At 18 years of age, he is one of the best prospects of Cuban judo.

For the troop directed by Julio Alderete, a priori it seems more difficult to obtain a medal than for the women. However, in the difficult universal panorama, dominated by Europeans and Asians, each ippon from the Caribbean will tell that judo is alive on this side of the world.



**Radio Habana Cuba**