

Cuban taekwondo star to miss Pan American Games in Chile

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Havana, September 29 (JIT) - The best Cuban taekwondo star of recent years, Rafael Alba, will not attend the Pan American Games in Santiago 2023, Ivan Fernandez, president of the Cuban taekwondo federation, confirmed to Jit.

A nagging injury prevents the Pan American champion (+80 kg) in Toronto 2015 and silver medalist in Lima 2019, as well as two-time world champion (Puebla 2013 and Manchester 2019), from competing.

"He is still suffering from an injury. We want to preserve him for the Olympic qualifier," said the seventh Dan and national commissioner Ivan Fernandez, when confirming the absence of the also bronze medalist at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Undoubtedly, the absence of the giant facilitates the path to the podium of other renowned figures in his division, such as Mexican Carlos Sansores, world silver medalist in Baku 2023, and American Jonathan Healy, monarch in Lima 2019.

Replacing Alba at the upcoming continental multisport event will be Guillermo Enrique Perez, 27 years old and 1.95 meters tall.

Accompanying Perez in the combat modality (kyorugui) will be Angel Yaniel Fernandez (68 kg) and Kelvin Calderon (80 kg), all of them debutants in multisport events in the Americas.

Among the Cubans, only the multi-sport Arlettys de la Caridad Acosta (67 kg) repeats at that level, with options to improve her bronze medal from Lima 2019.

Frislaidis Martinez (+67 kg) and Marlyn Perez (49 kg) are also part of the women's armada.

In poomsae (imaginary combat), Tania Indira Delgado and Darío Enrique Navarro will defend the colors of Cuba.

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