

Juantorena has high hopes for Cuban athletes

• SANTIAGO DE CUBA.- The notable progress made by Cuba in key disciplines, above all the triple and long jump, will be decisive as the country looks toward the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, according to Alberto Juantorena, President of the Cuban Athletics Federation, speaking in this city.

Also Vice President of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), Juantorena praised the level of young athletes such as Maikel Massó and Juan Miguel Hechevarría, both long jumpers, as well as the more experienced, including discus thrower Denia Caballero and pole vaulter Yarisley Silva.

We have to look after our young athletes and give them the necessary confidence to achieve Olympic success, the winner of

the 400 and 800 meters in the 1976 Montreal Games added.

Meanwhile, the Central American and Caribbean Games in Barranquilla, Colombia, next year, will be a big challenge for the Cuban team, according to Juantorena.

Most countries want to win every event, but it's impossible for one nation to dominate in throwing disciplines as well as sprint and long distance races, jumping events and multi-sport competitions. However, we do have athletes that can help to place Cuba at the top of the country medal chart, and I'm sure that's just what we will do, he stated.

"We are working hard every day, revising training plans, athletes must be in top form, from the qualifying rounds right through to the final," stressed Juantorena.

Meanwhile, the sporting official also noted that although the city has a new gymnasium and two new race tracks, which are soon set to be completed, the most important thing is the technical aspect and the work of coaches.

Likewise, Juantorena highlighted the high costs associated with athletics: for example a single javelin costs about 700 USD, a pole vault 1,500 USD, and accompanying mat 46,000 USD; while the price of the synthetic material used for a six lane race track is about half a million dollars.

Finally, around 30 Cuban athletes have qualified for the 2018 Barranquilla competition, reported the former sprinter, currently touring universities in the east of the island.

(ACN) •



Juantorena highlighted the importance of the work of coaches with young athletes.

BASKETBALL IN EL SALVADOR

Torres and Valdés win silver

PRENSA LATINA



Torres during a decisive game.

Jorge Carlos de la Paz

• CUBAN basketball players Orestes Torres and Lisván Valdés finished second in the last round of El Salvador's basketball league, after their team Santa Tecla BC lost against Halcones de Sonzacate in the final.

The title was decided in the fourth and final round of this series, with a score of 74-83, depriving the pair from Havana of a repeat of their past win against the Halcones de Sonzacate in the last championship.

Led by Captain Jared Ruiz, from Puerto Rico, top scorer with 32 points, 11 rebounds and seven set ups, Sonzacate dominated the competition with

three wins and one loss to secure their first title in the history of the tournament.

During the final, Torres scored 20 points, while a penalty incurred after a clash between Valdés and Sonzacate's Marco Tejeda on Saturday, November 4, which Santa Tecla BC immediately appealed, saw the Cuban benched for the entire match.

The series final of the Salvadoran competition was marked by hostile and offensive behavior from the Sonzacate fans toward the Tecla BC team and match referees. According to a report from Charly Morales, Prensa Latina correspondent in El Salvador, a photojournalist documenting the actions of the Sonzacate fans against the

Santa Tecla players was assaulted by the president of the winning team's entourage, after fans stormed the pitch, causing the local police to intervene.

Santa Tecla called on the Salvadoran Basketball Federation and national Major League to sanction the Sonzacate team, however, no action has been taken to date.

A total of six Cuban players are currently on loan to Salvadoran teams, which as well as Torres and Valdés, include, point guard Osmel Oliva from Artemisa, center Yoel Cubillas from Villa Clara, with the El Rápido team; in addition to two female players: Arlenis Romero and the recently acquired Leydis Oquendo, both with Santa Tecla. •

2018 VOLLEYBALL MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Last of the 24 qualifying teams to be decided in Pinar del Río

Alfonso Nacienceno

• WITH the African qualifier for the 2018 Volleyball Men's World Championship over, only the North, Central America and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation (NORCECA) qualifier, to be held November 10-12 in Pinar del Río, remains to complete the 24 teams to compete in the Championship to be co-hosted for the first time.

Italy and Bulgaria will host the competition, held every four years, a novelty that will see the tournament take place across the cities of Bari, Bologna, Florence,

Milan, Rome and Turin in the Italian peninsula; while the Bulgarian capital of Sofia and the resort of Varna and Ruse will also host world volleyball players, September 10-30, 2018.

Both nations have their place at the tournament secured, while the other 20 teams to have qualified are: Poland, current World Champion, which hosted the 2014 edition; France, Holland, Slovenia, Russia, Serbia, Finland and Belgium, from the European continent.

Meanwhile, Japan, Iran, China and Australia make up the Asian teams, Brazil and

Argentina will represent South America, whilst Tunisia, Egypt and Cameroon will represent the African continent.

The United States, the Dominican Republic (returning to the competition after a 44-year absence), and Canada were the three teams to qualify in the NORCECA event previously held in Colorado Springs, the U.S., which Cuba and Puerto Rico were unable to attend given the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, respectively.

The U.S. city, considered the heart of the country's volleyball movement, was set to decide five teams for the 2018 World

Championships, but as the Cuban and Puerto Rican teams were unable to participate, it was decided that the top three teams would qualify, with the remaining two to be decided in Pinar del Río.

The Cuban city's 19 de Noviembre volleyball court will see the two Caribbean teams compete alongside Mexico and Guatemala, who came fourth and fifth in Colorado Springs. The hosts and Puerto Rico are expected to have the best chances of qualifying in this single round-robin tournament to secure a place at the World competition. •