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Iván Pedroso, "I have taken a different path"

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Iván Pedroso no longer lives in Cuba. He has changed Miramar for Spain. Not for France as many think. After absent for a while, he reappeared to Cubans a year ago, on the bleachers of the Luzhniki stadium during the world championships in Moscow, in a new role. He was shaping the career of Frenchman Teddy Tamgho, the one, two, three, the flight, and the final spurt. A technical sequence, so majestic, so neat, that was traded in gold.

Now Pedroso is the coach of the triple jump world champion, an athlete absolutely unbelievable, the talent he scatters from his pockets, but outside the tracks without spikes and wearing Lycra is a too extravagant guy, even angry. Teddy, indoor world record (17.92), is not going through a good time sports wise, has been banned for one year by the French Athletics Federation for being absent in several anti-doping controls. Earlier, he had also been suspended for hitting a female athlete in the camp.

Both coach and athlete decided to travel and get away from the shadows lurking Tamgho to regain fitness after this prolonged impasse which has also been marked by a serious injury to his right tibia. They have already gone to Europe, were about a month in Havana. Days before the farewell I could talk with the legendary long jumper.

But it was not the talk I would have liked to have with Pedroso, this calm dialogue without rush, in which we had talked about that legendary night in Sydney and that rascal Jai Taurima, his superb battle to unseat the wall of nine meters, his 8.96 and impertinence of the wind, his 9 world championships, the 4 outdoors and 5 indoors. A conversation where I at least I had time

to startle.

**The long jump gave you all your winnings in athletics, however, now you are coaching triple jump. Is it a cyclical issue or of taste?**

Jumping workouts have many similar things; the only difference is that the long jump has a higher angle and triple jump a much softer. But I always liked the triple jump at the beginning of my career when I was 15 or 16 years I practiced it, I liked it more than the long jump. What happens is that I was lucky that the results in the long came faster and that made me forget the triple. I have taken this new challenge as a coach to motivate me, so this sudden lapse of retirement does not overwhelm me too much. It is very difficult to leave the track, so I have prepared to face this new phase, not to leave and get away from the sport. I can never be away from it.

**How did your meeting with Teddy take place, how did you get to be his coach?**

It was simple. I went to attend a rally in Europe as an amateur and he competed that day. Seeing me in the stands, he contacted me through a Cuban coach who works for the French Athletics Federation, then we talk and I left. The connection remained and we kept communicating through Facebook. Teddy asked me if I wanted to be his personal trainer, he liked that idea because since childhood he had me as an idol. We agree a date, we met and started training. That fast.

**Teddy Tamgho is considered perhaps the most talented triple jumper in the world, but his ego, his irrational conduct off the field often betrays him. Tell me a little about your relationship with him.**

We are working together since October 2010 and I have been appreciating his growth; undoubtedly he has matured. Like many athletes make mistakes in their youth, lack of experience betrays and often makes decisions and commits unlawful deeds. Above all, the problems Teddy has had are outside the sport, but has slowly been improving a lot, and is 25 and is not the same as before, he thinks and meditates things better. But I tell you, there is no reason to fall on those mistakes, the mistakes are in life, and we are mortal, happen to all athletes. What happens is that Europe is very aggressive, does not forgive the slightest slip.

**Tamgho is coming out of a very difficult situation, is serving a disciplinary sanction imposed by the French Athletics Federation and also recovering from injury. Tell me about those things.**

Now he is well, in excellent shape. We have completed a basic and essential training; he has finished muscular endurance cycle showing in top condition. And the penalty time ends next March, although it may be shortened and he can start competing before, we are waiting for the final verdict, and it materializes as expected, Teddy will be jumping in the upcoming European Championship.

**Why Havana for injury recovery?**

We decided in Havana because Paris is a city with a very convoluted weather to train, as there is sun, and then it is cold, it rains, and it is very difficult to train under those conditions. We always we moved to southern Spain or South Africa, but in these areas the heat is too dry. Then I told Teddy that the heat of Cuba is different, the aches, pains disappear instantly because it is

a very hot, humid weather and absorbs all physical problems.

**Did Teddy like Havana?**

He loved it very much, he was satisfied with the stay, and we are coming back again. Above all, because he could train in peace on the beach and because the weather has been favorable for recovery, and because people have been so nice and have given him plenty of advice. He knows many of the athletes of the national team, has coincided with them in events and also recently shared with some Cubans in the World Junior Championship where his junior athlete was the champion

**Among the most serious rivals Teddy Tamgho may encounter today are Lazaro Martinez and Pedro Pablo Pichardo. What feelings do you experience when you have a Cuban athlete as a contender?**

I spent many years representing Cuba, gave all possible wins, I could not give any more, but it turns out I have now taken a different path, I coach the France team, but everything is still quiet, nothing happens, including Cuba and Ivan the thing will never change. Remember the Moscow World Cup last year ?, in the stands we were sitting together, one beside the other, Professor Ponce, Daniel Osorio and national commissioner Jorge Luis Sánchez, in the final of the triple jump. People cannot be surprised with this kind of issues; they have to see the triumphs of Cubans who are under other flags as a triumph for Cuba, as a success for the country too. And not realizing that if Pichardo took silver because Ivan Pedroso's athlete took gold, but Cuba is represented in France and that also has to give people pride.

**You've been home only a month. Tons of nostalgic to leave the homeland back?**

Being out of your land is not easy; being away from family, friends, loved ones is not nice, is torturous. You feel alone, you have no one, but in life you have to sacrifice to achieve the goals one sets. In my case I had to leave everything behind, it is difficult but not impossible.

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