
Mijaín's milestones

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi

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Almost every day the name of Mijaín López is heard even though he has not arrived in Paris just yet. The Cuban legend will go for some milestones in the Olympic Games held in the City of Light.

Everyone is aware that he is going after his fifth Olympic title in the highest category of Greco-Roman wrestling, which will make him the only wrestler ever in winning five titles. Regarding women, only Japanese wrestler Kaoro Icho (2004-2016) has won four times the gold medal.

Besides, “The Giant from Herradura” would become the only human being with gold medals in five different Olympic Games, as U.S. Michael Phelps and Carl Lewis, as well as Russian Larissa Latyna, top winners in the history of Olympic Games, did not won so many gold medals in so many Olympiads.

If he is able to accomplish the feat at the Champs-de-Mars Arena, he will also become the oldest wrestler in winning an Olympic title, as he

would surpass Finnish Adolf Lindfors, an athlete who won a gold medal with 41 years, six months, and 12 days old in the Olympic Games held in Antwerps, Belgium in 1920.

The best Cuban athlete ever is about to celebrate his 42nd birthdays in the coming days.

I was surprised that Sports Illustrated, a renowned sports magazine that usually makes predictions before each Olympic Games, has Mijaín winning the bronze medal. But it probably arises from the fact that he has barely competed in the last four-years span.

In the absence of Turkiye's Riza Kayaalp, the last men who beat him in 2011, Sports Illustrated predicts that Iranian world champion Amin Mirzazadeh (Mijaín swept him 8-0 in Tokyo 2020), will take the gold and Egyptian Abdellatif Mohamed will take home the silver medal. These two are certainly great athletes, but still far behind Mijaín López.

With five world championships, three World Cups, a University World Championship title, five Pan American Games and three Central American and the Caribbean titles, the Cuban wrestler is a living legend in the wrestling world.

The break he took after winning in Tokyo was vital for him to continue thinking about winning a new crown. I am sure that weight issue would have undermine his motivation to continue and hence give up halfway.

He was 10 or 15 kilograms overweight before he got back up, and now he is less than two, a normal figure that high-level athletes in this sport reduce before the official weigh-in, where Mijaín will have his first bout.

With batteries recharged, he is ready to sit alone on Olympus to observe humans from the heights.

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