

Mesa " The Stellar"

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And life, which is so unexpected and capricious, wanted Alberto Juantorena at the 1979 Barrientos Memorial in Havana to run on track number four, while Felix, "the stellar" Mesa, ran on track eight in the 800-meter flat. Felix Mesa Yaver can't help but feel the emotion when he remembers that moment of his life. Today, provincial athletics methodologist; yesterday, an athlete with unforgettable results in the 1 500 meters. "It's a very difficult specialty. Imagine, only two Cubans before and after the triumph of the Revolution have been able to climb to the podium in Central American games; one of them is the Guantanamo Luis Medina". Felix pauses and I immediately realize that the other one was him. It was 1986.

I was in three Central American championships, two espartaquizadas, one world university, plus four tours that I made in Europe".

"I have the joy and privilege of holding all the titles of athletics in Cuba in my specialty. But I am national champion in 800, 1 500 and 5 000 meters, as well as in the 4x400 relay and domestic runner-up in 10 000 meters.

"I've been to Mexico twice as a coach, and I've gone there as they say to dance at the spinning top, because without Cuba having great long-distance runners throughout history, I managed to take athletes from there to two world cross-country championships, to the World Cup in England, the Central American Games in Puerto Rico and Colombia, and the representative of that nation that was under my tutelage was the first Mexican to win a bronze medal in a World Universiade. It was in Fukuoka, Japan, in 1994.

"The success of the sport in Pinar del Río and in general, lies in the base. If you make a good selection and capture, the future is guaranteed. It is also necessary to take the knowledge in accordance with the times that we live; the training of 30 years ago is no longer the same one that is needed now and towards it we have to focus. We have digitalized bibliography, internet, that is, the only way to make up for material shortages is to provide more knowledge to our coaches. To become a Central American university champion in my specialty is something I don't forget, because I wanted to give myself that medal in honor of all those who helped me succeed in life.

If this interview is published, let it be a recognition to all long-distance runners. And once again, to my parents, my wife Isabel and my brother. In them I always found the strength to move forward. Talking to this man made me understand once again how many people remain anonymous and deserve their valuable story to be told.