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CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GAMES: GUATEMALA, CUBA AND MEXICO DIVIDE RELAY TITLES



Excitement was at fever pitch for the final day of the Central American and Caribbean Games with the Women's, Men's and Mixed Relay events bringing four days of superb competition to a close.

The Women's Relay got the action underway and the crowd certainly weren't disappointed at the top class field on display.

The Guatemalan team of Sophia Hernandez and Ximenia Dieguez (GUA) made a very strong start winning the Fencing competition and maintained their dominance throughout the Swimming and Riding to hold a 19 second advantage heading in to the Combined Event.

However, the impressive Mexican duo of Tamara Vega and Elena Nogueda (MEX) were breathing down their necks the entire time and that made for an exhilarating climax.

After the first 1600m, Vega (MEX) had eaten in to the 19 second gap and caught up with Dieguez (GUA). At the 2400m mark, going into the last Shooting section, Nogueda (MEX) had built up what

looked like an uncatchable 11 second lead over 17 year old Hernandez (GUA).

The enthralled crowd watching events unfold were convinced that the Gold was now Mexico's for the taking thanks to Dieguez's determination. But the youngster Hernandez (GUA) dug deep and in the final 200m sprint caught up with her rival to take the Gold for Guatemala.

That left the Mexicans in second with Silver and the Cubans, Eliani Camara and Leidis Laura Moya finishing third to take Bronze.

The Men's Relay was competitive, but less exciting as a spectacle with the Mexicans in control from start to finish. Their duo of Ismael Uscanga Hernandez and Sau Rivera were second in the Fencing, but took top spot in both the Swimming and Riding to give them an unassailable lead going into the Combined Event.

Cuba's Yaniel Velazquez and Jose Figueroa were second with Venezuela duo Julio Luna and Eduardo Salas in third passing Guatemala in the final 200 metres with a very strong run from Salas.

In the Mixed Relay, Cuba came out on top with the team of Leydi Laura Moya and Jose Figueroa (CUB) dominating each of the disciplines to win by a considerable margin from their rivals.

Their score of 1435 points was miles ahead of second placed Guatemalans Isabel Brand and Charles Fernandez (GUA) who took the silver with 1377 points.

Bronze went to Mexico's Thelma Martinez and Manuel Padilla.

The final medal count for the Central American and Caribbean Games sees Cuba and Mexico tied at the top of the table each with two golds, two silvers and two bronzes. Guatemala sit third with one gold and one silver while Venezuela come in fourth with one bronze medal.

Competition director Juan Manzo and Technical Delegate Janusz Peciak were extremely pleased with the outcome of the competition and the great response by the crowds in Xalapa. "The challenge we face in four years is to assist Colombia so that our sport will once again be present in Barranquilla 2018", they said.

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