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CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GAMES: ISMAEL HERNÁNDEZ WINS THE GOLD IN ELECTRIC ATMOSPHERE



A crowd of nearly 3,000 spectators came out to watch the second modern pentathlon event in the Central American and Caribbean Games. They were treated to an exciting combined event that saw the top six competitors change positions several times during the competition. Ismael Hernández of Mexico, who was in the fourth position after three events, was able to pull away in the final two rounds as he maintained his concentration and had nearly perfect shooting rounds that combined with his excellent running ability were enough to conquer a very difficult field. The crowd was delighted with the combined event format and pushed Ismael on by chanting each of his successful shots with a count from one to five. He also won the combined event with a time of 11.34 helping him reach 1443 points in the modern pentathlon competition. He was followed by the Pan American Champion, Jose Figueroa of Cuba, who was third in the combined event with a time of 11.43 and a final score of 1420 points. His countryman, Yaniel Velazquez, passed Saul Rivera of Mexico in the final lap and finished third with 1413 points.

Guatemalan junior Jorge Imeri won the fencing event with 23 victories and 257 points, Saul Rivera

was second with 250 points and Alex Hernandez of Dominican Republic, Yaniel Velazquez, Charles Fernandez and Andreas Papadopolis of Guatemala all tied for third with 236 points. Lester Ders Del Rosario of Cuba won the swimming event with a time of 2.05.03; Ismael Hernandez with 2.06.00 and Charles Fernandez with 2.06.37 followed him. In the riding event, Guatemalans Andreas Papadopolis and Jorge Imeri, had a clean round and tied for first with 299 points. Yaniel Velazquez was third with 293 points. The level of the horses proved to be more than adequate for the competition as it provided for a true test of the riders' skills.

With 17 athletes from 7 nations this has been the deepest field in the history of the Central American and Caribbean Games since Modern Pentathlon was admitted in 2002. Fabian Ramirez of Costa Rica deserves special mention since in only in his first year of competition, he was able to place eleventh ahead of several more experienced athletes. The competition will finalize with the women's, men's and mixed relays where the fight for gold will be very close.

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