

= Puerto Rico at the 2008 Summer Olympics =

Puerto Rico competed in the 2008 Summer Olympics which was held in Beijing , People 's Republic of China from August 8 to August 24 , 2008 . The American territory with a population of four million people qualified 22 athletes in eight different sports . The appearance of the Puerto Rican delegation at the Beijing Olympics marked the commonwealth 's sixteenth consecutive appearance at the Summer Olympics , and its twenty @-@ second appearance at any Olympic games , since its debut at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London , England . Of its competitors participating in events that involve progression by heats , six athletes advanced at least one round in their events , and two advanced at least two rounds , with Asunción Ocasio almost medaling bronze in taekwondo . However , there were no Puerto Rican medalists at the Beijing Olympics . McWilliams Arroyo , a boxer , bore Puerto Rico 's flag at the ceremonies .

= = Background = =

Puerto Rico is a large island on the northern rim of the Caribbean Sea that is home to approximately 4 million people . It lies due east of the Dominican Republic and to the west of the United States Virgin Islands . Puerto Rico was first colonized by the Spanish , but was ceded to the United States in the wake of the Spanish ? American War in 1898 . Puerto Ricans were granted American citizenship in 1917 , although it remained apart from the United States and has a constitution that provides for self @-@ government . 41 years after Puerto Ricans became American citizens , Puerto Rico sent its first delegation to the Olympics at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London , England . The American commonwealth has sent a delegation to all sixteen Summer Olympics between then and the 2008 Beijing Olympics in addition to six Winter Olympic games .

Between its 1948 debut and its arrival at the Beijing Olympics , Puerto Rican athletes had won six medals (one silver and five bronze) . The last medal earned by a Puerto Rican was a bronze medal by Daniel Santos at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta . No medals were won by Puerto Ricans at Beijing . During the course of the 2008 Olympics , 22 athletes represented Puerto Rico ? 17 men and five women ? in eight sports (track and field , boxing , artistic gymnastics , judo , shooting , swimming , taekwondo , and weightlifting) . The size of the delegation was 21 athletes smaller than the Puerto Rican delegation that arrived at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens , and 58 athletes smaller than Puerto Rico 's largest Olympic team , which included 80 athletes participating in the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montréal , Canada . The oldest member of the Beijing delegation was Lucas Bennazar , a sharpshooter , who was 39 years old at the time ; boxer Jonathan González , in contrast , was the youngest at 19 years old . Boxer McWilliams Arroyo was the nation 's flag bearer at the ceremonies .

= = Athletics = =

= = = Men 's team = = =

= = = = Men 's 400 meters = = = =

Félix Martínez participated in the Beijing Olympics in the men 's 400 meters dash on behalf of Puerto Rico . Martínez competed at Beijing while he was 23 years old . He had not previously competed at any Olympic games . During the August 17 qualification round , Martínez participated in the sixth heat , which included eight athletes . At the end of the event , Martínez placed seventh after achieving a time of 46 @.@ 46 seconds . He ranked ahead of Poland 's Daniel Dabrowski (47 @.@ 83 seconds) and behind Grenada 's Joel Phillips (46 @.@ 30 seconds) , while Great Britain 's Andrew Steele (44 @.@ 94 seconds) and Trinidad and Tobago 's Renny Quow (45 @.@ 13 seconds) lead Martínez 's heat . Of the 55 finishing athletes , Martínez ranked 44th . He did not

advance to later rounds .

===== Men 's 1 @, @ 500 meters =====

David Freeman competed for Puerto Rico at the Beijing Olympics , participating in the men 's 1 @, @ 500 meters race . He was 26 at the time of his participation in Beijing , which marked the first time he competed in any Olympic event . During the August 15 qualification round , Freeman was placed in the third heat versus 12 other athletes . He finished the event in 3 : 39 @. @ 70 , placing tenth . Nicholar Kemboi of Kenya placed behind Freeman (3 : 41 @. @ 56) , while Estonia 's Tildrek Nurme placed ahead of him (3 : 38 @. @ 59) . The Puerto Rican runner 's heat was led by South African athlete Juan van Deventer (3 : 36 @. @ 32) and Spain 's Arturo Casado (3 : 36 @. @ 42) . Overall , David Freeman ranked 25 out of the 48 finishing athletes . He did not advance to later rounds .

===== Men 's 110 meters hurdles =====

Héctor Cotto Gonzalez participated for Puerto Rico in the men 's 110 meters hurdles race , the only Puerto Rican participating in the event . Cotto was born in Fajardo , a city on Puerto Rico 's far northeastern coast , and participated in the Olympics for the first time in Beijing at age 23 . Cotto participated in the August 17 quarterfinals in the third heat , ranking sixth out of the heat 's eight athletes after achieving a time of 13 @. @ 72 seconds . He defeated Haiti 's Dudley Dorival (13 @. @ 78 seconds) , but fell behind the Cayman Islands ' Ronald Forbes (13 @. @ 59 seconds) in a heat that was led by Colombia 's Paulo Villar (13 @. @ 37 seconds) and Barbados ' Ryan Brathwaite (13 @. @ 38 seconds) . Of the 40 athletes who finished the event , Cotto ranked 28th . He progressed to the next round .

During the August 19 quarterfinals , Héctor Cotto Gonzalez participated in the first heat . He finished the event in 13 @. @ 73 seconds , placing last in a heat of eight athletes . He fell behind Russian hurdler Igor Peremota (13 @. @ 70 seconds) and Trinidad and Tobago 's Mikel Thomas (13 @. @ 62 seconds) in a heat that was led by the United States ' David Payne (13 @. @ 24 seconds) and the Czech Republic 's Petr Svoboda (13 @. @ 41 seconds) . 30 of the athletes who progressed to the quarterfinal round completed their races ; of these , Cotto ranked 27th . He did not advance to later rounds .

===== Men 's 400 meters hurdles =====

Javier Culson Rodríguez (or Javier Culson Perez) participated in the Beijing Olympics on the behalf of the Puerto Rican track team , participating in the men 's 400 meters hurdles . Culson was 24 at the time of his participation in the Beijing Olympics . He had not previously competed in any Olympic games . During the August 15 qualification heat , Culson participated in the third heat , which was composed of six athletes . The Puerto Rican runner ranked fourth of the six athletes , finishing the race in 49 @. @ 60 seconds . He ranked ahead of China 's Meng Yan (49 @. @ 73 seconds) and behind Poland 's Marek Plawgo (49 @. @ 60 seconds) in a heat that was led by Jamaica 's Markino Buckley (48 @. @ 65 seconds) and South Africa 's LJ van Zyl (48 @. @ 86 seconds) . Of the 25 finishing athletes , Culson ranked 15th . He progressed to the semifinal round .

Puerto Rico 's sole representative in the event participated in the first heat during the August 16 semifinal round , where he faced seven other athletes . Culson finished the race in 49 @. @ 85 seconds , ranking last . South Africa 's Pieter de Villiers ranked ahead of him in seventh place (49 @. @ 44 seconds) , as did Russia 's Alexander Derevyagin , who ranked in sixth place (49 @. @ 23 seconds) . Culson 's heat was led by American hurdlers Angelo Taylor (47 @. @ 94 seconds) and Bershawn Jackson (48 @. @ 02 seconds) . Of the 16 semifinalists , Javier Culson ranked 14th . He did not advance to later rounds .

== Women 's team ==

=== Women 's 200 meters ===

Carol Ann Rodríguez Taylor competed for Puerto Rico at the 2008 Beijing Olympics in the women 's 200 meters dash . She was the sole female Puerto Rican representative participating in track and field during that year . Born in Pomona , a northerly suburb of Los Angeles , Rodríguez attended the University of Southern California . She attended the Beijing Olympics at age 22 , and had not previously attended any Olympic games as a competitor . During the August 18 qualification round , Rodríguez competed in the second heat against seven other athletes , achieving a time of 24 @. @ 07 seconds . Of those seven , six finished the event . Rodríguez ranked seventh in the heat behind Mariely Sanchez Hichez of the Dominican Republic (24 @. @ 05 seconds) and Bulgaria 's Ivet Lalova (23 @. @ 13 seconds) . She placed ahead only of Belgium 's Kim Gevaert , who did not participate in the race . The leaders of Rodríguez 's heat included first place finalist Muna Lee of the United States (22 @. @ 71 seconds) and French second place finalist Muriel Hurtis @- @ Houari (22 @. @ 72 seconds) . Of the 46 athletes who finished the race , Rodríguez tied Benin 's Fabienne Fereaz for 40th place . She did not advance to later rounds .

=== Women 's 400 meters ===

During her debut at the Beijing Olympics , Carol Rodríguez participated in the women 's 400 meters race alongside her entry into the women 's 200 meters dash . She was placed in the third heat during the August 16 qualification round , which included seven athletes in total . Rodríguez completed the event in 53 @. @ 08 seconds , defeating Haiti 's Ginou Etienne (53 @. @ 84 seconds) but falling behind Barbara Petrahn of Hungary (53 @. @ 06 seconds) . The leaders of Rodríguez 's heat included Russia 's Anastasia Kapachinskaya in first place (51 @. @ 32 seconds) and Mary Wineberg of the United States in second place (51 @. @ 46 seconds) . Of the 50 athletes competing in the event , the Puerto Rican sprinter placed 36th . She did not advance to later rounds .

== Summary ==

Key

Note ? Ranks given for track events are within the athlete 's heat only