

Boxers Who Disappeared Are Taken Back to Cuba

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HAVANA, Aug. 5 — The two Cuban boxers who disappeared during the [Pan American Games](#) last month and were found last week at a Brazilian resort were back in [Cuba](#) on Sunday.

Guillermo Rigondeaux, Cuba's top boxer and a two-time Olympic bantamweight champion, and Erislandy Lara, an amateur welterweight world champion, arrived in Cuba early Sunday after being deported from Brazil, Cuban state radio and television reported.

The two had failed to show up last month for their scheduled bouts during the Pan Am Games, prompting their disqualifications. The Brazilian police arrested them Thursday for overstaying their visas in the coastal resort city of Cabo Frio, near Rio de Janeiro, where authorities said they had been carousing and running up an exorbitant tab at a hotel.

Last month, the German boxing promoter Arena said it had signed Lara and Rigondeaux to five-year contracts. Details of that deal are not clear.

The two boxers told the Brazilian police that they had been contacted by a German businessman, and that they had given their uniforms and passports to him.

President [Fidel Castro](#) of Cuba said in comments published Sunday that the boxers would be confined to guest houses upon their return, although he promised not to punish them harshly.

In his remarks published Sunday in the Communist Youth newspaper Juventud Rebelde, however, he was quoted as saying the boxers had “communicated that they had committed an error and that they repented.”

The police also said the boxers had asked to go home.

The Brazilian federal police inspector Felicio Laterca said Friday that it remained unclear why Rigondeaux, 25, and Lara, 24, abandoned their delegation. But he said the boxers were “saying they are very dear athletes in their country and that’s why they want to return.”

Rigondeaux won the Olympic gold medal in 2000 and 2004 and is also a world champion. He became Cuba’s top boxer after the retirement of Mario Kindelan in 2004 and was looking for his third Pan Am title.