

Cuba Beats Puerto Rico to Qualify for Next Year's Tournament



Havana, November 17 (RHC-ACN)-- Puerto Rico and Cuba are the last of the 24 qualifying teams set to participate in the Volleyball Men's World Championship, which will take place for the first time in two locations: Bulgaria and Italy, in September 2018.

After losing 3-0 to Mexico on November 11, in Pinar del Rio's 19 de Noviembre stadium, coach Nicolás Vives' players were faced with a difficult situation. They were obliged to defeat Puerto Rico 3-0 in order to qualify for the World tournament, while their rivals only needed to win one game to secure their ticket and eliminate Cuba.

Mexico got off to a good start on the final day of the competition, winning 25-14, 25-20, 25-22 against Guatemala, to finish with a score of 10 points, after defeating this team and Cuba, while losing to Puerto Rico on the first day of the tournament, for an overall points ratio of 1.052.

Cuba's 25-21, 25-22, 30-28 win against Puerto Rico meanwhile, was enough to see the team also finish with 10 points after additionally defeating Guatemala, and losing to Mexico. Thus Cuba scored an average of 1.124 points, to come in second, just behind Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico also earned 10 points after defeating Mexico and Guatemala, to advance to the three team final with Mexico and Cuba. However, despite losing 0-3 to the latter, they secured the overall highest points ratio: 1.157, to take first place in the competition.

Regarding Cuba's final match, effective teamwork between passer Adrián Goide and Miguel David Gutiérrez (best opposite of the game) saw the latter score 20 points, followed by wing Miguel Ángel López (16) and center Javier Concepción (10). The home team committed 28 errors, while Puerto Rico only made 23. The first set saw Cuba exploit seven errors by two of Puerto Rico's players, to keep their chances of victory alive.

The team began its definitive advance toward victory in the second half of the game, during which Puerto Rico committed numerous errors, which saw the two squads tied at 15 points.

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