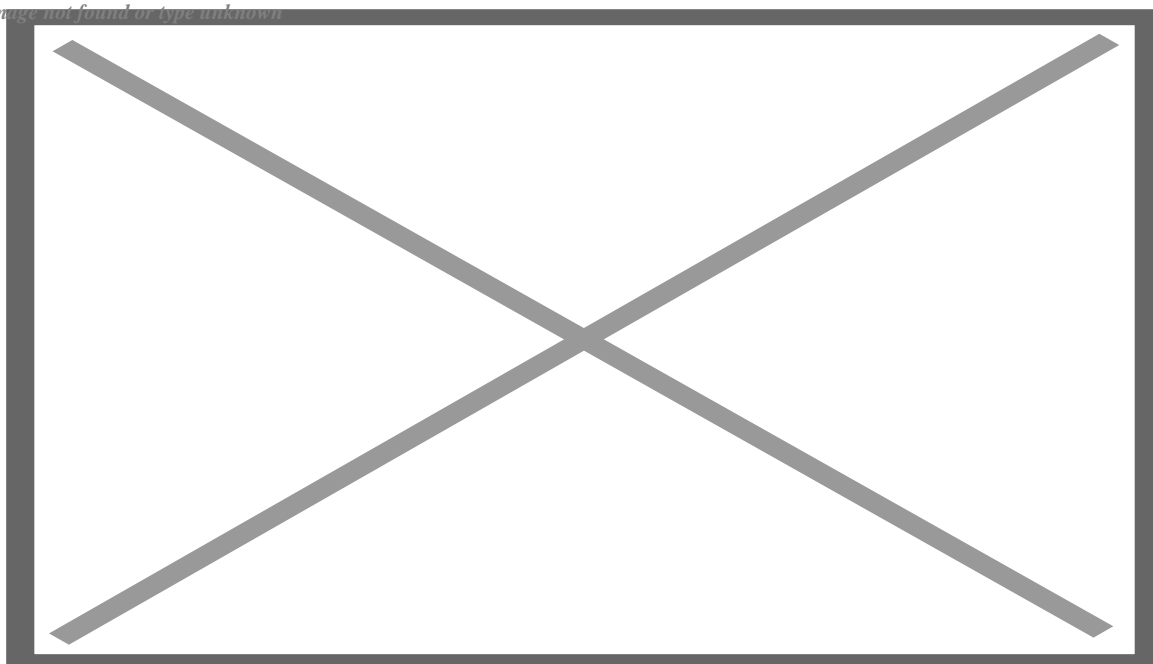


Cuba vs. Italy this Saturday in Round 16 at the Volleyball World Cup

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Cubans Simón and Herrera

Havana, September 3 (JIT) - The Cuban volleyball team will have a difficult commitment this Saturday in Round 16 of the 20th Men's World Championship in Ljubljana, Slovenia, when they face the powerful Italy.

The Bambinos advanced to the round of 16 undefeated in Group E, after victories over Turkey, Canada and China, while the Caribbeans advanced as one of the best third-placed teams in the group, thanks to their success against Qatar and setbacks against Brazil and Japan.

At the end of the preliminary phase of the six groups - the A and C groups with a seat in Poland -, the best-placed Cubans in the official statistics were opposite Jesús Herrera and center Robertlandy Simón.

The left-handed artemiseño finished second among the top scorers and in the attack department with 60 and 53 points, respectively. Nimir Abdel-Aziz, representative of the Netherlands, led the way with 85 and

68, in that order.

The Cuban was seventh in direct points per service with six, a section led by Ukrainian Oleh Plotnytskyi (12). In defense, West Indian libero Yonder García finished eighth.

Capital giant Robertlandy Simón finished second among the best blockers, with nine points, an amount also added by Mexico's Axel Manuel Téllez. Topping the list was Japan's Taishi Onodera (10).

In the Italian team, Daniele Lavia was 14th among the top scorers, with 46 points, and tenth in attack and defense. Fabio Balaso was fourth in field defense.

On Saturday, before the clash between the Caribbean and Europeans (3:15 p.m.), Slovenia will face Germany. On Sunday, in the Polish city of Gliwice, the second-placed teams in groups C and E, in that order, will face the United States against Turkey, and Poland (1st C)-Tunisia (3rd A).

On Monday in Ljubljana, the Netherlands (1st. F)-Ukraine (2nd. A) and France (1st. D)-Japan (2nd. B) will meet; and on Tuesday, again in Gliwice, Serbia (1st. A)-Argentina (3rd. F) and Brazil (1st. B)-Iran (2nd. F) will meet.

The quarter-final round will be shared by both venues on September 7 and 8 (Ljubljana and Gliwice). The semifinal and grand final will be held in the Polish city of Katowice.

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