

# *Cuba opens with setback in Volleyball Final Six*

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Havana, September 5 (JIT) - The Cuban women's team lost to the defending champions Dominican Republic (19-25, 17-25, 18-25) in the opening of the II Pan American Norceca Final Six Volleyball Cup Santo Domingo 2022.

In a packed Ricardo Arias Volleyball Palace, the experienced hosts outplayed their rivals in attack (40-33), blocking (10-6) and service (7-3), and also committed fewer errors of their own (12-18).

The top scorers of the match were local players Yonkaira Peña (14), Gaila González (12) and Brayelin Martínez (10).

Cuba's top scorers were Dezirett Madan and Ailama Cesé with nine points each, followed by Laura Suárez and Greysi Finé, who added six points apiece.

Their coach Tomas Fernandez told the official website that "we thank Dominican Republic for the intensity they had playing with us, for me it is a nice headache to face this team that has a lot of prominence not

only in the Pan American region, but also worldwide. You learn a lot playing against this team.

Brazilian coach Marcos Kwiek said that "it is very good to have Cuba back in international events, something we are missing, that Cuba raises its level and we have more teams in our zone because we all grow".

"We try to play our game respecting tactics and techniques. It is a long tournament because it is played every day and this is just the beginning," he added.

Earlier Puerto Rico had no setbacks to overcome Canada with a sweep of 25-18, 25-16 and 25-18, in a match during which veteran Karina Ocasio -in her return to the Puerto Rican team- showed her best physical and technical form to score 22 points.

The other with double digits was her compatriot Pilar Victoria with 10, while the northerners Layne Buskirk and Gabrielle Attieh contributed eight units each. The islanders outscored the northerners with a wide margin of 44-27 in attack and 9-4 in blocking.

In the other match of the opening day, the United States defeated Mexico by 3-0 sets (25-19, 25-21, 25-18). Danielle Drews was the best scorer for the winners (15 points), followed by Veronica Jones-Perry (13), Bastianelli (11) and Nia Reed (10). For the Mexicans Karina Flores led her team with 10 points.

On Monday, Cuba and Canada open the program at 3:00 p.m., followed by Puerto Rico-United States and Mexico-Dominican Republic.

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