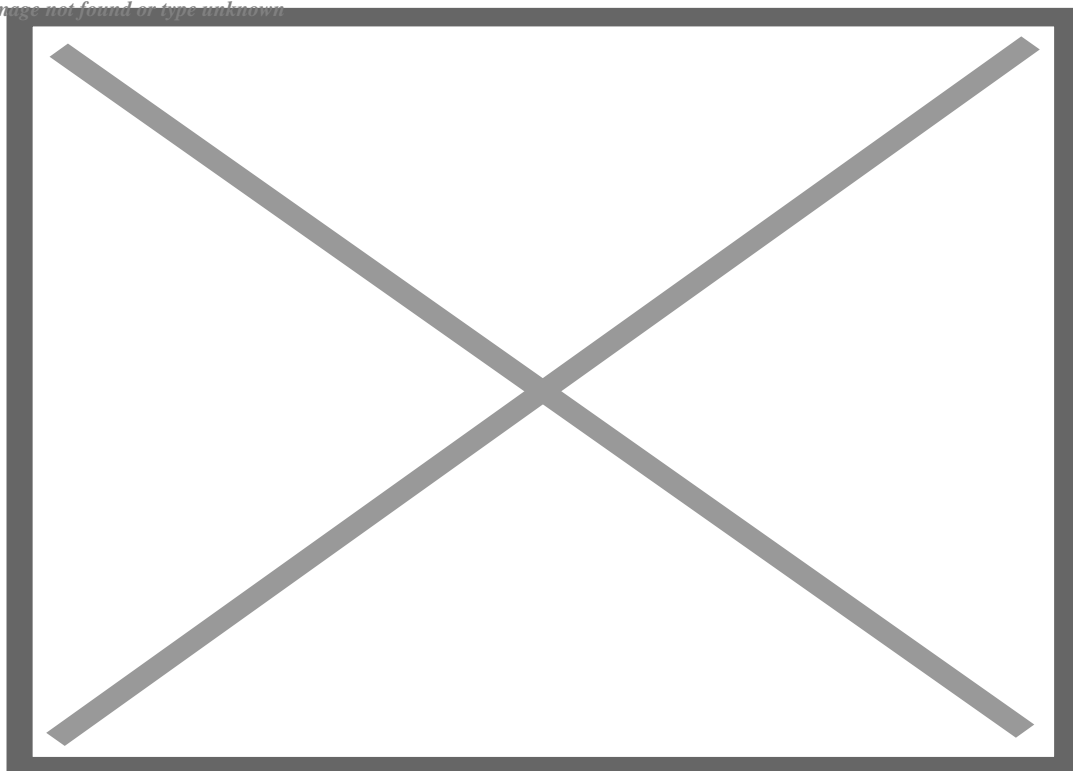


Cuba is champion of the U-21 Pan American Volleyball Cup

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Havana, June 11 (RHC)--- Cuba became the new champion of the Norceca U21 Men's Pan American Cup 2023 after defeating defending champions United States in a sensational match with a 3-2 (21-25, 21-25, 30-28, 25-15, 15-11) slate at the Ciudad Deportiva Coliseum.

The locals, cheered on by the fans during two hours and 16 minutes of play, got rid of the "thorn" stuck in their sides by defeating them in tie-break in the group elimination and in the final, where they received the trophy from the hands of Osvaldo Vento Montiller, president of Inder.

The award ceremony was attended by Ariel Sainz, vice-president of the sports organization and head of the Cuban Volleyball Federation, as well as the stars of the sport and members of the Norceca control committee.

When it seemed in the third set that the visitors would return home with the crown again, the Cuban team reacted and tied the match at two sets to finish it off in the fifth set, but not without a great battle between both teams.

The home team finished with a bigger advantage in attack (52-47), while in blocking (17-16) and service (9-8) the difference was minimal.

Opposite Alejandro Miguel Gonzalez, who once again showed his leadership, was the top scorer with 26 points, very well seconded on offense by corner players Bryan Camino (22) and Jose Ramon Gomez (10), and middle blocker Jakdiel Contreras (10), while the other blocker, Alexis Wilson, added eight points.

In the previous edition, the United States defeated Mexico, now absent, in the final and Canada took the bronze by beating Cuba, but this time they occupied the same place on the podium after defeating Puerto Rico 3-1.

Jesús Cruz, the hosts' coach, stated that "first we achieved our goal of improving on last year's fourth place. We got together and analyzed that there was nothing to lose, we had to come to get the victory, there was nothing to be reserved, nothing to take care of, it was only one game to give our all and if the opponent came out with the success, it had to be with the best version of Cuba".

He said that "it didn't work out in the first two sets, but we were able to turn things around, the best thing the group had in this tournament was the possibility to change. If the rival changed their tactics, we did the same and that's how we stayed during the whole game. In the end it worked out better for us.

Alejandro Miguel expressed that "we had the opportunity and we knew how to take advantage of it to win the matches in the tie-break, we grew in the face of difficulties and that is why today we are celebrating the gold medal".

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/deportes/325222-cuba-is-champion-of-the-u-21-pan-american-volleyball-cup>



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