

Cuba vs. Canada in Norceca lid semifinals

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Havana, September 9 (JIT)-- Cuba dominated Mexico in three sets and will face Canada this Saturday in the semifinals of the Norceca Men's Volleyball Championship 2023.

The match concluded in just over an hour with scores of 25-20, 25-16 and 25-23. The substitutes entered the court and were able to maintain the advantage that guaranteed the regular lineup.

Opposite Jesus Herrera, corner attackers Marlon Yant and Miguel Angel Lopez, passer Christian Thondike and center backs Roamy Alonso and Javier Concepcion started the challenge. Yonder Garcia combined his role as libero with Alain Gorguet.

In the opening set, the Gutierrez brothers, Jose Miguel and Miguel David took the court, followed by Osniel Mergarejo, setter Lyvan Taboada and middle blocker Alexis Wilson. Young José Carlos Romero entered the serving line.

When the Mexicans pressed in the third set, head coach Jesús Cruz did not alter the lineup and his students sealed the match.

Our team led in attack (47-40) and service (7-1). They even committed fewer errors of their own (11-17) and only their rivals were better in blocking (6-4).

I kept them because these athletes need to acquire responsibilities and take charge of the task they have in a match, commented to JIT technical director Cruz, who is assisted by Mario Izquierdo, a long-time duo with the cadet and junior categories of the Island.

This was an important match, because it puts us in the semifinals and we will fight against Canada for a pass to the gold medal. It is also a tournament that serves as preparation for the pre-Olympic, where all players are key because it is a very strong event, he said.

The top scorer of the challenge was corner attacker Mergarejo with 15 points, including 10 spikes, three serves and two blocks. Others who contributed were Concepcion (8), Jose Miguel (7), Herrera (6) and Yant (5).

For Mexico, Josue Lopez (13) and opposite Luis Hernandez (12) were in double digits, among the stars that veteran coach Jorge Azair is renewing his ranks and is counting on this group for the Pre-Olympic Games in China and the Pan American Games in Santiago 2023.

In the other semifinal match on Saturday, the United States will have the Dominican Republic, who defeated Puerto Rico 25-19, 25-21 and 32-30 at the Coliseum and Convention Center of Charleston, capital of the state of West Virginia.

In the second hour, starting at 7:30 a.m., the Cubans will face the Canadians.

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