

Cuba revives with victory against Olympic champion France in the VNL



Havana, June 9 (RHC) - The Cuban volleyball team knew how to come from behind and showed that it is still alive in the Nations League (VNL), by beating the current Olympic champion France 3-2 in a hard-fought match.

With the return of their main inspiration to the field, Robertlandy Simón, and with Marlon Yant and Miguel Angel López in a luxurious day, the Caribbean played their best game in the second week of the tournament in Ottawa, to add their fourth victory in the tournament against France (25-18, 20-25, 23-25, 25-22 and 15-10).

Simón returned after missing three games due to back discomfort and his contribution was very important, especially on the net, by getting 5 points for blocks and giving a lot of cohesion to Jesús Cruz's squad.

Once again Marlon Yant was the “engine” of the Cubans (23 points and a superb 73 percent effectiveness in attack), accompanied by captain Miguel Angel López (21), Javier Concepción (13), and Simón and

Osniel Mergarejo (9 each).

In addition to achieving their first victory in the second week, those from the island added valuable 9.55 units to the Olympic ranking and returned to the qualification zone (250.64), pending the result of the clash with their direct rival, Serbia, who plays this Saturday against Argentina.

The Cuban squad was illuminated this Saturday in blocking, scoring no less than 13 points and committing fewer unforced errors than France (22).

The French depended largely on the clash of some substitutes, but their bench is luxurious, as they are one of the best teams in the world in recent years.

With the victory, the Cubans shook off three previous defeats in Ottawa against Canada, the Netherlands and Italy, which had taken them out of the Olympic qualification zone.

Even without finishing the day this Saturday, the Cubans are in seventh place in the VNL (4-4 and 12 points), behind Italy (6-1), Poland (6-2), Japan (6-2) , Slovenia (6-1), Brazil (5-3) and France (5-2).

In the third and final qualifying week they will face local Slovenia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Poland in Ljubliana.

The VNL quarterfinals will be played from the final June 27 to 28, the semifinal on the 29th, and the final on June 30 in Lodz, Poland.

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