

Cuba and the U.S. for gold in Pan American Volleyball Cup

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Havana, June 10 (RHC)-- The teams of Cuba and the United States will discuss the gold medal in the Norceca U21 Men's Volleyball Norceca Pan American Cup 2023, in a match scheduled for 4:00 p.m. today at the Ciudad Deportiva Coliseum.

The local team advanced to the grand final thanks to their victory this Friday over Puerto Rico without many setbacks and with straight sets of 25-20, 25-14 and 25-21.

The defending champions from the United States beat their Canadian neighbors 25-17, 25-21, 21-25 and 25-16.

Canada, who won the bronze medal last year after defeating Cuba, will have the opportunity to climb the podium again when they face the Puerto Ricans at 2:00 pm.

In the previous edition, Cuba lost to the Americans in the semifinals. In this tournament they got rid of the "thorn" by defeating them in the group.

The Dominicans and Nicaraguans, winners of Guatemala and Haiti in that order, will play for the fifth place. The latter will fight to avoid being in the cold basement.

Efficient blocking and powerful serving were two lethal weapons of the locals against the Puerto Ricans, in a match in which they were better in attack (37-25) and blocking (15-5). They acted with fewer errors of their own (19-22), the Achilles' heel of our team. Puerto Rico had six aces to one for the home team.

Cuba's offense was well distributed by setter Yonni Iglesias. Three of his men scored double digits: corner players Jose Ramon Gomez (18) and Bryan Camino (12), and opposite Alejandro Miguel Gonzalez (10). For the Puerto Ricans, the most productive player was opposite Jamal Ellis with 14 tallies.

With this performance, the host team improves on the 2022, when they finished in fourth place. On the court, the progress of Jesús Cruz's disciples has been evident.

Precisely, the coach said that in a semifinal there is always tension and more so in young players.

The game went the way we predicted it would in the meeting to analyze the opponent. The boys followed the tactical plan to the letter, the blocking worked perfectly and we made fewer serving errors, said the Cuban coach.

He stated that at the beginning we had some inaccuracies. At the beginning of each set we started evenly, but then we got up and took the required advantage to play calmer. We did what the technical staff instructed us to do and we complied with the tactical plan. We are satisfied and with all the desire to fight for the gold tomorrow, he expressed.

Puerto Rican coach Carlos Rodriguez referred to the fact that we didn't know how to control the emotions in the first set, which was 19-19. It led us to make mistakes after basically dominating the first set. I think Cuba tightened in the blocking and the service hurt us, he commented.

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