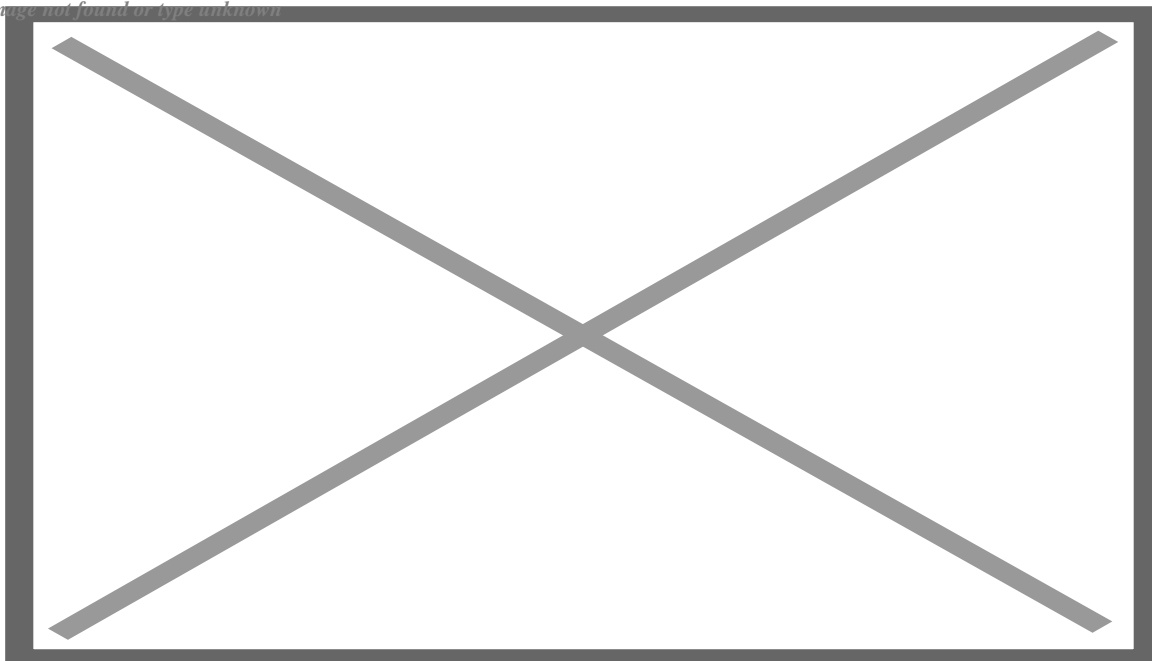


Cuban volleyball is crowned undefeated in San Salvador Games

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Cuban volleyball team

San Salvador, July 3 (JIT) - The Cuban men's volleyball team showed its strength and did not stop until winning the trophy of the XXIV Central American and Caribbean Games undefeated. Beating Suriname (3-0 sets), Dominican Republic (3-1) and Puerto Rico (3-1) in the group stage, the team from the largest of the Antilles took the semifinal against Guatemala (3-0) on Saturday, even appealing to the substitutes.

For the final, coach Nicolas Vives brought out all his star players to the court and "crushed" (25-17, 25-17 and 25-22) a team from Quisqueyano that was never in a position to jeopardize the Cuban victory.

The remarkable attendance at the Palacio de los Deportes Carlos "El Famoso" Hernández enjoyed the Cuban superiority, with men with experience in the main leagues of the world wearing their best clothes.

Vives lined up with passer Lyvan Taboada, opposite Jesús Herrera, assistants Miguel Ángel López and Marlon Yant, middle blockers José Massó and Javier Concepción, and libero Yonder García.

From the very first set they attacked with their serve, showed a high efficiency in attack and made their blocking work. Such a demonstration could only lead to a clear victory.

The top Cuban scorers were Javier Concepcion (12), Miguel Angel Lopez (11) and Jesus Herrera (11). For the Dominican Republic, Hector Cruz and Henry Tapia added more, both with 11 tallies.

"It was a good tournament. We came to win. We had not been champions since Maracaibo 1998. That was the goal, step by step. The performance of the team was a whole, the counterattacking was good, the reception, the serve and the blocking defined in the important moments", Vives told the press after the match.

"Dominican Republic is on the rise, they beat Puerto Rico in the semifinals. This generation is good, they are working and in the future they could have good results," added the Cuban helmsman.

"It was an interesting competition. Today in the final we went out more confident, confident that we could achieve the victory for the Cuban people. That was the goal and we achieved it. We felt the change of level from the league of nations to these Games, but we did not underestimate the rival. They are players we know and the important thing is to compete with joy and unity," commented star player Marlon Yant.

"To congratulate the team for the way they presented themselves today. We made very few mistakes and everyone stayed focused from start to finish. The tournament is below the level we are playing at this past month, but all the opponents gave the best of their abilities. We were on top and we won," said Miguel Angel Lopez, who was very happy to win this title with the Island's national team.

Four Cubans were among the best players of the tournament: José Massó in blocking; Javier Concepción in serving; Lyvan Taboada as setter and libero Yonder García as the most valuable player.

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