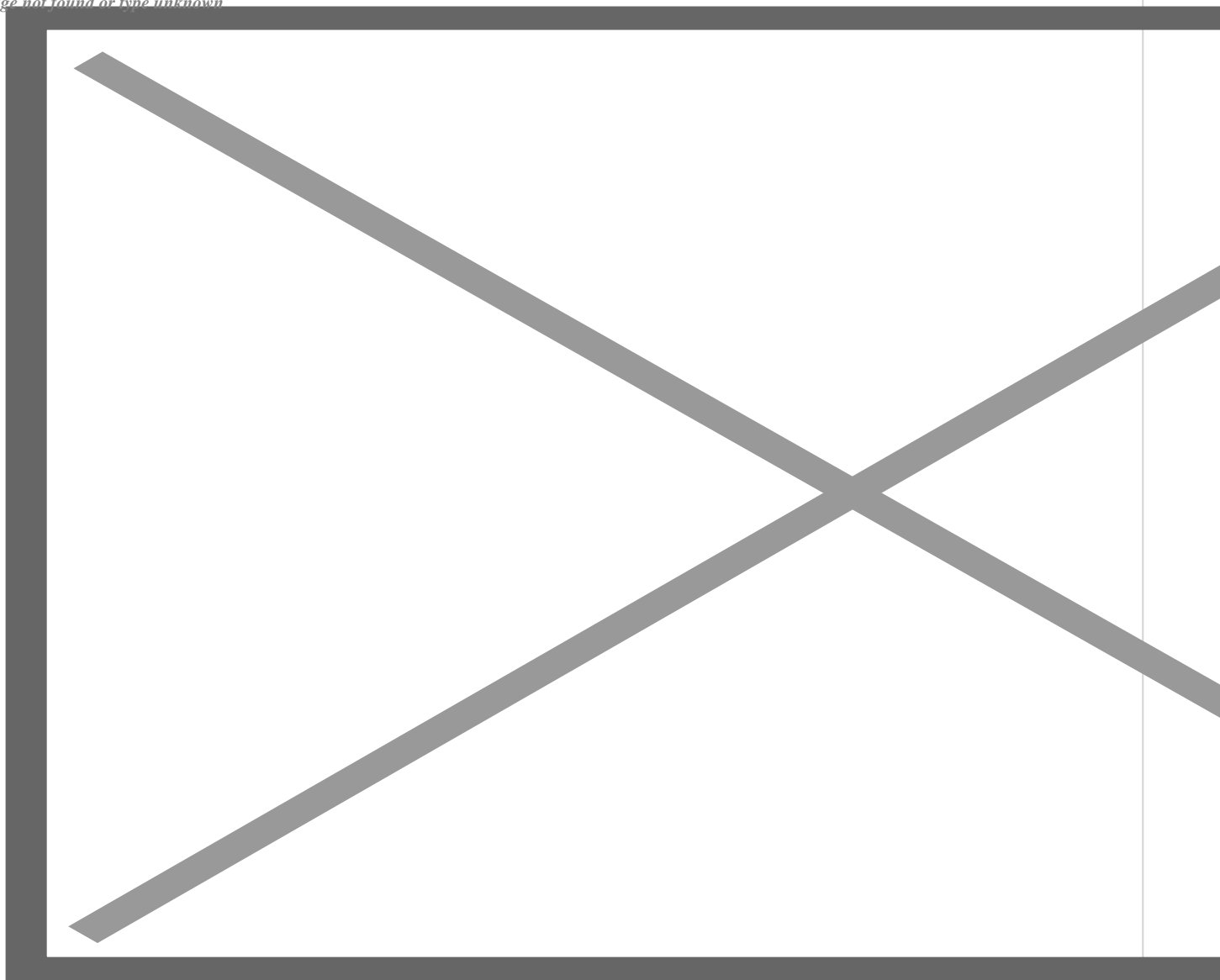


Mergarejo and Marlon protagonists in Italian Volleyball Superleague playoffs

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Havana, March 25 (RHC) - Cubans Osniel Mergarejo and Marlon Yant lived a day of luxury and led their clubs to important victories in the playoffs of the Italian Volleyball Super League.

Coming off the bench, Mergarejo deserved the distinction of Most Valuable Player (MVP) in Milan's five-set come-from-behind victory over compatriot Robertlandy Simon's Piacenza.

With the win, Milan evened the quarterfinal series at two wins apiece and forced a fifth and deciding match on Wednesday.

In only two sets (fourth and fifth), Mergarejo scored 12 points, 8 in attack and 2 in blocking, with excellent efficiency percentages of 57 in attack and 50 in reception.

Reggers Ferre, a Belgian barely 20 years old, and the Japanese Yuki Ishikawa, were the top scorers for Milan with 22 and 20 points, respectively.

For Piacenza, Cuban center Robertlandy Simón could not shine as usual and left with 9 points and a block, while Cuban-born Brazilian Yoandy Leal also scored 15. Yuri Romano shone for Piacenza with 29 points.

In the other quarterfinal match in the Italian Serie A, Cuban Marlon Yant was once again cardinal in the Lube Civitanova's 5-set win over Monza to even the quarterfinal series at two wins apiece.

With 24 points, Marlon was one of the top scorers for the Lube, scoring the same number as his teammate, Bulgarian Alexander Nikolov, who deserved the MPV distinction, especially for scoring several points at crucial moments.

Marlon scored 22 of his points in attack with an efficiency of 52 percent.

The Villa Clara native's last two games have been phenomenal, scoring 27 points in the third (MVP) and 24 in the fourth (this Sunday).

For Monza, Canadians Stephen Marc (23) and Artur Szwarc (17) shined.

The Civitanova-Monza and Milan Piacenza series will be defined on Wednesday in the fifth games and the winners will advance to the semifinals, where Trentino and Perugia are already waiting.

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