

# *Cuba debuts with a resounding victory against Brazil in VNL and continues dreaming of Paris*

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Havana, May 22 (RHC).- The Cuban men's volleyball team showed its best side at the beginning of the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) by beating the multi-awarded Brazil 3-1 in front of a delirious crowd that filled the Maracanazinho with Rio de Janeiro.

Harmony, great field defense, blocking, variety in the attack and dedication on the court distinguished the students of Jesús Cruz, to win almost two hours of battle with partial scores of 25-23, 27-29, 25-21 and 25-21 and continue dreaming of Olympic qualification for Paris-2024.

With the victory they added 12.7 in the world ranking – it will give them the last five Olympic tickets -, and they climbed from 11th to tenth place, close to the classification zone, although still behind other teams seeking their ticket: Italy, Argentina, Slovenia and Serbia.

"Let's go," star Robertlandy Simón said, visibly excited at the close of an interview with official TV, after the victory against the team of renowned coach Bernardinho on his return to the helm of the green-yellow team.

Five of the Cuban starters scored double figures, a sign of the rapport achieved with the young starting passer Christian Thondike, a rising figure with great vision of the game.

Cuba cemented the victory in blocking and serving, in which it was literally superior to Brazil (10-4 and 7-4, respectively).

In the individual order, the experienced opposite Michael "el Ruso" Sánchez cleared up doubts about his performance, leaving with 14 points and 66 percent effectiveness in attack, minimizing the absences in the position of Jesús Herrera and Miguel David Gutiérrez , both injured.

Marlon Yant (18 points, several in key moments and 4 aces), Miguel Angel López (15), Javier Concepción (13, five in blocks) and the star Simón (12, 3 blocks and an effectiveness of 77 percent on attack) , also shone for the Cubans.

Equally worth highlighting is the coaching staff led by DT Cruz, who played his cards very successfully, and came into the game without showing all his weapons in the friendlies against Argentina.

The Cuba-Brazil matches have always been very close. According to statistician Wilber Rodríguez, the Cuban team had not beaten Brazil 3-1 since the 1998 World Cup.

Cuba rests this Wednesday and returns to the field on Thursday to face Germany, its executioner in recent years.

In other matches on the opening date of the VNL, Japan beat Argentina 3-1, Canada beat Turkey 3-1, and France beat Bulgaria 3-0.

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