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Nivaldo and Sergio capped actions with gold at Varadero

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Nivaldo Díaz and Sergio Hernandez of Cuba-A outclassed Christian Redmann and Felipe Humana of Canada-A 2-0 (21-13, 21-13) to win the men's gold medal at the Varadero Tournament, the fourth stop of the NORCECA Beach Volleyball Circuit held for the fifth consecutive year at the beautiful tourism spot.

At the Barcelo Solymar Arenas Blancas Resort, the bronze medalists at the Pan American Games and champions at the Central American Games in Veracruz 2014, reaffirmed their solid game and didn't offer their North American opponents any break during the 32-minute match under sunny skies and surrounded by enthusiastic fans.

"I don't think Canada and United States brought their strongest players, but in any event the competitors go out for the win and we knew we had to have our top game and rhythm to give Cuba a well deserved triumph," said Nivaldo, the younger member of the host team.

His partner Sergio said to be very glad with their second gold medal, added to the first they got at the start of the circuit at Cayman Islands, but even more because his country surpass the expectations every year.

"I think this one has been the best. All the hotels during the previous stages did their best to give their support, and this has not been the exception, but my compatriots really worked hard and efficiently to have an event technically organized at the highest level. Now I hope these performances allow us to compete at the world tour to reach the elite and dream with a decorous performance at the great competitions like the Olympic Games," Sergio said.

The bronze medal went to the United States team of Edwin Mark Burik and Curt Toppel, silver medalists in the previous stop, who edged Yendry Castillo and Liosbel Méndez of Cuba-B in a three-set battle that lasted 1 hour and six minutes 2-1 (21-16, 20-22, 15-13) warming up the sand for the title's matches in both genders.

### **Sunday's Results**

**Bronze Medal Match:** USA d CUB-B: 2-0 (21-16, 20-22, 15-13). **Gold Medal Match:** CUB-A d CAN-A: 2-0 (21-13, 21-13).

### **Final Positions:**

1.- Nivaldo Díaz/Sergio González (CUB-A); 2.-Christham Redmann/Felipe Humana (CAN-A); 3.- Edwin M. Burik-Curt Toppel (USA); 4.-Yendry Castillo/Liosbel Méndez (CUB-B); 5.-Fabien Whitfield/Daneil Williams (TRI); 6.- Aaron Nusbaun/Mike Plantinga (CAN-B); 7.- Marc Lomeli/Brian Kwasny (ISV); 8.-Rubén Mora/Miguel López (NCA); 9.- William Sánchez-Luis Castillo (DOM); 10.- Rooper Espinoza/Alexander Villegas (CRC); 11.- Franklin Flores/Armando Guatemala (ESA); 12.-Senel Dupuy/Kelpes Vilmont (HAI); 13.- Marty Wood-Wilfredo Vega (HON); 14.- Furgil Ong A Fat/Zefanio Breinburg (SUR); 15.-Tevin St. Jean (LCA)/ Agustín Faulkner (LCA).

The USA-A duo of Sara Hughes and Kelly Claes took home the women's crown at the fourth stage of the NORCECA Beach Volleyball Circuit by defeating the home Cuban team of Leila Martínez and Lidianni Echeverria (CUB-A) 2-0 (21-18, 24-22) to close the Varadero Tournament at Barceló Solymar Arenas Blancas Resort.

The Americans, winners of the bronze medal at the previous stop in North Bay, Canada displayed great ability but also took advantage of the inconsistent concentration of Leila, runner-up at the Pan American Games in Toronto, who partnered this time with a 19-year-old youngster who showed composure despite her inexperience.

The Californian native Hughes commenting on behalf of her team said: "We are very happy and

elated to be in Cuba for the first time. It is a beautiful place, the event has been pretty and the conditions were very good."

Leila, who was the victim of the lethal serves from the winners, said that even though she was unable to step on the highest place of the podium "it is important for the younger players to develop and to help them. We want to prepare well for the Olympic qualification towards Rio de Janeiro 2016 where I expect to be with my partner Lianma Flores, and the youngsters also can produce a good performance."



On the other hand, the Costa Ricans Karen Cope/Natalia Alfaro obtained the bronze medal by outplaying Irene Hester/Caitlin Ledoux (USA-B) 2-1 (21-13, 17-21, 15-13) in a battle that lasted almost one hour to not let down those who favored the Latin Americans in the tournament that welcomed 15 pairs of each gender from 15 countries visiting Varadero for fifth consecutive year.

### Sunday's Results

Bronze Medal Match: CRC d USA-B 2-1 (21-13, 17-21, 15-13). Gold Medal Match: USA-A d CUB-A 2-0 (21-18, 24-22).

### Final Positions:

1.- Sara Hughes-Kelly Claes (USA-A); 2.- Leila Martínez-Lidianni Echevarría (CUB-A); 3.- Karen Cope/Natalia Alfaro (CRC); 4.- Irene Hester- Caitlin Ledoux (USA-B); 5.- Gloria Santoyo/Stephanie Burnside (MEX-B); 6.- Kerri Smit/Victoria Cowley (CAN-B); 7.- Rachel Cockrell/Camille Saxton (CAN -A); 8.- Jennifer Batista/Raquel Ferrand (DOM); 9.- Ayana Dyette/Malika Davidson (TRI); 10.- Lianma Flores/Yanileidis Sánchez (CUB-B); 11.- Ana Ríos/Bibiana Candelas (MEX-A); 12.- Ana Villagrán/Aury Álvarez (GUA).- Dala Noel/Skye Faucher-Mondesir (LCA); 14.- Janice Valtes/Sigourney Kame (SUR); 15.- Amber Bennett/Valissia Brathwaite (ISV).

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