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Cuba and Puerto Rico claim Olympic beach berths

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HAVANA, Cuba, May 28, 2018 - The Cuban home boys Miguel Angel Ayón and Jorge Luis Alayo grabbed the gold medals of the NORCECA Central Zone Qualifier by beating Puerto Ricans William Rivera and Randall Santiago 2-0 (21-14, 21-19) while both teams had secured spots in the beach volleyball tournament of the Youth Olympic Games in Argentina next October.

The bronze medal went to Tim Brewster/John Schwengel (USA) after a hard-fought clash against Leonel Garza/Franky Hernandez (Mexico) that finished 2-1 (21-16, 17-21, 15-13) in the second court ready for the final at the Club Habana.

The slender Alayon, 16, thanked all the coaches in his life for the chance to enjoy the title and the Olympic pass in his international debut, as well as the support of his family and the Cuban sports movement.

"Especially the coaches who did an arduous job for the preparation ahead of this commitment, in which the Puerto Ricans were the ones who showed us the most resistance, we congratulate them because we will go together to the games, where we will fight to have a great performance".

His teammate Ayón assured that "we always focus to win even though we knew it

would be a very even tournament, we are very happy for this victorious start and we will continue to emphasize and reach the best shape for what is coming in Argentina. It has been a very nice event and it gave us a good experience".

Both Cubans and Puerto Ricans won their respective A and B pools to advance to the semifinals, a stage in which the Cubans defeated Brewster and Schwengel (USA) 2-0 (21-18, 21-17), and Rivera and Santiago beat the combative Mexican duo that integrate formed by Leonel Garza and Franky Hernández (Mexico) 2-1 (21-17, 19-21, 15-8).

Sunday's Boys Final Summary:

Quarterfinals: Leonel Garza/Franky Hernandez (Mexico) d Cole Irwin/Robert Kemp (Canada) 2-0 (21-17, 21-16) and Tim Brewster/John Schwengel (USA) d Deivy Ramírez/Raymer Sarmiento (Republic Dominicana) 2-0 (21-12, 21-17).

Semifinals: William Rivera/Randall Santiago (Puerto Rico) vs. Leonel Garza/Franky Hernandez (Mexico) 2-1 (21-17, 19-21, 15-8) and Miguel Ángel Ayón/Jorge Luis Alayo (Cuba) vs. Tim Brewster/John Schwengel (USA) 2-0 (21-18, 21-17).

Finals:

Gold: Miguel Ángel Ayón/Jorge Luis Alayo (Cuba) d William Rivera/Randall Santiago (Puerto Rico) 2-0 (21-14, 21-19).

Bronze: Tim Brewster/John Schwengel (USA) d Leonel Garza/Franky Hernandez (Mexico) 2-1 (21-16, 17-21, 15-13).

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