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**Cuba dominated Puerto Rico and secured seat for the World Final Challenger**

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Cuba dominated Puerto Rico 3-1 (21-25, 25-15, 25-15, 27-25) to secure gold in the Norceca Challenger Men's Volleyball Tournament and the quota to the World Final Qualifying to the League of Nations in Slovenia next July.

In the Sports City Coliseum there were emotional moments for the combative actions of the opponents, although the superiority of the hosts was evident mainly with a superb blocking, and comfortable second and third sets.

Then they certified their level in the fourth when coming from behind and closing the match against rivals who did not give up their efforts until the last breath.

The local attacker Marlon Yang was the top scorer of the contest with 19 points, followed by also corner player Osniel Mergarejo (10), while left-handed Jesus Herrera and center Roamy Alonso made effective contributions, each with 8 points.

For the Puerto Ricans again the top scorer was the corner Pelegrín Vargas with 15, the only one with double digits of his selection, while the central Pedro Nieves contributed 9, and the other blocker Jonathan Rodríguez and the attacker Kevin López 8 each.

The Cubans added 21 blocks against only 4 by Puerto Rico, and 12-6 difference in service, while in attacks they scored more than the winners (45-26).

In the first set the Cubans, as is almost usual, entered too confident. Although the service of the Cubans was not as effective, on the contrary, the blockade, which worked very well and limited the attack of their rivals mainly in the second and third set.

Nicolás Vives, technical director of Cuba, assured that "I always knew that the Puerto Ricans were going to resist us because they are players who know how to play, who participate in their leagues and we have to know how to face them. Our team always relies a bit on the first time, but we won the next two easy, and in the fourth we started down unnecessarily, for situations in the game that they create because they relax. However, we returned to our rhythm little by little we reached them until we achieved victory."

"We thought to make more change so that others had the opportunity to play, but the fourth time it got a little tense against us, but José Massó and Miguel Ángel López fulfilled their function when we sent him to the court," said the home trainer.

Roamy Alonso, a striker precisely in the defense of the net, said that "we train a lot this position, is one of our main weapons and serve, are well connected. We fought to stabilize the service so that we were given the blockade, everything went as expected, although we really expect this reaction from the Puerto Ricans, they are opponents who always impose and do not give anything, they go out to war like us, we are similar and they always give a good game. "

Manuel Acevedo, DT of Puerto Rico, did not hesitate to say that "I thought we could play face to face because in the game against Mexico for Cuba it was very bad, he verified that he was not in a good moment, both work for a peak, this It is a very early stage of the season in which you have difficulties and the locals that day made many mistakes."

"The first partial surprised me, we entered well, from the beginning things were done that we had raised as the continuity of the work of the opposite, which was not the case in the next two, I made changes and in the fourth set the two of the bench made the job. I think it was a very entertaining game and much more competitive than perhaps people thought. That's good for both teams and especially Cuba, which has a very difficult tournament in Slovenia. "

Pelegrín Vargas, captain of Puerto Rico, said that "our team, despite its youth, we have a lot of character, we do not give anything, Cuba had to defeat us. There were two partials that were a bit erratic and timid, but in the end we showed what we are made of. Cuba is a great cast when it is ahead, it is very difficult because

they put a lot of pressure on the service and it is difficult for us to attack. We are prepared for big competitions with the bigger group, we had not had a test like this and we showed that we can ".

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