
Cuba defeats Puerto Rico in first victory at Pan Am Games

02/08/2019



Cuba defeated Puerto Rico 3-1 (25-18, 25-19, 25-27, 25-20) in their first victory in pool A of the Lima 2019 Pan American Games on Thursday at the Multisport Complex El Callao of Lima, Peru.

Puerto Rico's rebound in the third set came from hard blocking and a good offense strategy, but still they came off short to remain with undefeated record in pool A. Cuba on the other hand, keeps their hopes of moving into semifinals with only one match left of the preliminary round.

Cuba and Puerto Rico with the same win-loss record (1-1) badly need to win their last preliminary match, with Cuba facing host Peru (0-2) and Puerto Rico playing against unbeaten Argentina (2-0) with one foot in the next round.

Cuba's towering blockers stopped Puerto Rico's offense with a huge 17-8 margin. Cuba finished with a slim 3-2 margin in aces and allowed 26 points on errors, while Puerto Rico held a slim 48-47 margin in attacks, committing 33 unforced errors.

Outside hitter Osniel Mergarejo scored 14 points on 12 kills and 2 aces as Cuba's top scorer; joined by Miguel Angel López also with 14 points on 13 kills and one block; and Yohan León added 13 points. Puerto Rico's offense was led by Pablo Guzman with 14 points of 31 attacks; Sequiel Sánchez scored 13 points on 11 kills and 2 blocks, while Jonathan Rodríguez tallied 10 points.

Comments:

Osniel Mergarejo, top scorer of Cuba: "We want to thank all our supporters here. Unfortunately after yesterday's loss and our bad performance, today we needed to come out to win and not be left out of the competition".

Nicolás Vives, Head coach of Cuba: "Our victory is what's important today. Puerto Rico is a good opponent. Despite losing to Argentina yesterday, I feel we played well and they knew how to finish on top".

Oswald Antonetti, Head coach of Puerto Rico: "Physically Cuba was always in the game; it's really hard facing them when they have confident offensively and in serves. We showed some character in the third set, but there is a lot to improve for tomorrow's match".
