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**Cuba serves and blocks to defeat USA**

24/08/2019



The U.S. Men put up a fight, but Cuba was too tough and took a 25-19, 25-23, 22-25, 25-14 in a NORCECA Champions Cup match at the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center.

The U.S. Men (1-1) will play Canada (0-2) in the round-robin finale on Wednesday at 7 p.m. MT. Cuba (2-0) will play Puerto Rico (1-1) at 1 p.m. MT. Matches are being shown live at <https://go.usav.org/USAV/watch>.

Cuba and the U.S. Men tied in attacks (47-47). Cuba led in blocks (11-6) and aces (10-6). Cuba scored 29 points on U.S. errors and committed 22.

Osniel Mergarejo and Robertlandy Simon led Cuba with 16 points each. Mergarejo had 11 attacks, three blocks and two aces. Simon finished with 10 kills, a match-high five blocks and one ace.

Michael Wexter and Cody Kessel led the United States with 13 points each.

Cuba coach Nicolas Vives: "The Americans are an excellent team. I liked how they played. I like the tactics of the U.S. The most important thing is that we won."

USA coach Matt Werle: "We looked a little intimidated. We didn't play with the personality that we had for the last eight or nine days. It seemed like they took us away from that and that's something I'm pretty disappointed about. When we put some service pressure on them, we got ourselves in nice situations. Our transition numbers were not what they should have been, and

that's something that we obviously would have needed. Cuba's a team that likes to end points quickly, and we allowed them to do that. It was tough to withstand. They're a very good, strong and physical, and they're good from the service line. They were better than us tonight."

USA player Michael Wexler: "They played a lot better than they did last night against Canada. They were serving absolute rockets at us. They didn't miss a lot, which is crazy because they were ripping the ball like 75 mph or more. Toward the end of the match, they started blocking a lot of balls that were falling earlier in the match against them. They started to tighten little things up that we were getting through earlier in the match."

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