



## Puerto Rico and USA debut with victories in Pool B

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil, July 23, 2007.- Puerto Rico and USA took victories in first day of action in Pool B of the Men's Volleyball Pan American Games Tournament.

Puerto Rico recovered from a first set loaded with defensive mistakes to defeat Argentina 3-1 (22-25, 26-24, 25-21 y 25-22), while USA swept Venezuela 25-19, 25-22, 25-20.

Puerto Rican captain Hector -Piky- Soto scored 21 points to lead the winners. Victor Rivera and Jose Rivera had 13 and 10 points and Marcos Milinkovic and Gustavo Scholtis had 18 and 16 for Argentina.

Sean Rooney topped four U.S. scorers in double figures with 14 points, Brook Billings totalled 12 points, David Lee contributed 11 points and Delano Thomas produced 10 tallies. Harry Gomez paced Venezuela with 14 points, while Luis Diaz contributed 11 points in the loss.

"I feel happy for the victory but not satisfied with our kind of play," commented Soto. "Now, a first game always presents you with some adjustments problems, and I am confident that our play will improve in this very tough competition."

"Definitely they took better advantage of the mistakes, and played better than us," said Jon Uriarte, the coach of Argentina.

Some experts considered as a surprise the victory of Puerto Rico but coach Luis Rodriguez did not agree with that perception.

"Both teams match-up well, we can beat each other, sometimes them and sometimes us. I don't think it was a surprise. I recognize the quality of Argentina and also the effort made by my players.

"This match was a good, collective effort as we got some young guys out there who contributed well," said Ron Larsen. "I am excited how we played. Now we have Argentina and Puerto Rico, and we will see how the young players focus."

"We came into this match knowing Venezuela was a great team," Larsen said. "They beat us 3-1 last year at the World Championship. We were able to serve the ball hard and in, which caused them some problems on serve-receive. On our side, we passed the ball well."

