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Puerto Ricans Santiago & Acevedo cap brilliant year in NORCECA

PUERTO VALLARTA, Mexico, October 18, 2010 – Puerto Ricans Yarleen Santiago and Dariam Acevedo capped a successful year by claiming the women's gold medal of Bicentennial Beach Volleyball Cup, the tenth and final stage of NORCECA Circuit on Sunday.

It was the fifth victory of the year for the Puerto Ricans who also won the titles at Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Chiapas and San Diego. They finished on the podium in the nine tournaments they took part of, winning two silvers and two bronzes.

The physical and mental strength of the Puerto Rico's pair was evident in their decisive 2-0 (21-15, 21-19) victory against Heather Bansley and Elizabeth Maloney of Canada. In semifinals, Santiago/Acevedo defeated Americans Cayley Thurlby and Nancy McGiven by score of 2-0 (21-14, 21-16).

Mexicans Martha Revuelta and Xitlali Herrera won the female's bronze medal with a 2-0 (21-15, 21-18) win against Thurlby and McGiven of USA.

"We focused on defense and had solid block in the first set," said a tired yet smiling Acevedo. "But in the second set, the Canadians came back and we started getting in trouble. Fortunately, we were able to score the points that gave us the victory."

"We had a lot of problems receiving and serving. We couldn't apply changes as quickly as we wanted to," explained Maloney who seemed happy to have come to Puerto Vallarta despite the loss.

In the men's division, Cuba's Yoendri Kinderlan and Sergio Gonzales defeated Mexico's Juan Virgen and Aldo Miramontes 2-0 (21-18, 21-18) to take home the gold medal. The Cubans played consistently throughout the whole clash and the home pair was not able to handle the islanders' strong attack and powerful serves.

Kinderlan/Gonzalez reached the decisive contest after a long battle of 73 minutes where they prevailed 2-1 (19-21, 31-29, 15-9) against brothers Ulises and Lombardo Ontiveros of Mexico-2.

The Ontiveros then subdued USA's Marcin Jagoda and Michael Diehl 2-0 (21-13, 21-13) to claim the bronze medal.

"The match turned out to be what we expected for so we changed our strategy because we had lost to them," Cuban Gonzalez said. "Our aggressive services gave us the advantage to win the match in two sets."

The awards ceremony was led by Ivar Sisniega, Director of Sports and Operations of Guadalajara 2011 Pan American Games Organizing Committee, who was accompanied by Miguel Beato, NORCECA Delegate, Ismael Acosta, President of the Mexican Volleyball Federation and Cesar Macias, Director of Sports Development for the City of Puerto Vallarta.

Women's results on Sunday: Semifinals: CAN-1 d. MEX-1 (21-15, 21-12), PUR d. USA (21-14, 21-16). Bronze: MEX-1 d. USA (21-15, 21-18). Gold: PUR d. CAN-1 (21-15, 21-19).

Men's results on Sunday: Semifinals: MEX-1 d. USA-1 (21-9, 21-14), CUB d. MEX-2 (19-21, 31-29, 15-9). Bronze: MEX-2 d. USA-1 (21-13, 21-13). Gold: CUB d. MEX-1 (21-18, 21-18).

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