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USA and Cuba secure berths in 2011 FIVB World Grand Prix

Tijuana, Mexico.- The unbeaten teams of USA and Cuba secured tickets to next year's FIVB World Grand Prix with both teams advancing directly to the semifinals of the Women's Pan American Cup as pool winners of the intercontinental competition.

Second placed sides Dominican Republic (3-1) and Peru (4-1) will play quarterfinals crossover matches against Puerto Rico (3-2) and Argentina (2-2) respectively on Thursday with the winners also entering the 2011 premier women's event.

The top three NORCECA ranked teams in the tournament and the top ranked side from South America earn spots in the FIVB competition of the following year.

USA v Mexico
USA defeated Mexico in straight sets (25-14, 25-16, 25-15) to win Pool B with unbeaten record of 5-0. The triumph earned the Americans a direct ticket to the semifinal round of the event. Megan Hodge and Nancy Metcalf were the best scorers of the winning side with 12 and 11 points respectively and Heather Bown chipped in nine. Mexicans Andrea Rangel and Samantha Bricio scored 11 and 10 tallies.

Cuba v Argentina
Cuba overcame Argentina 3-1 (23-25, 25-23, 25-15, 25-22) to win Pool A with an unbeaten record of 4-0. The victory earned Cuba a berth in the semifinals while Argentina concluded in third place and moves to the quarterfinals. Kenia Carcaces scored a match high 24 points to lead the Cuban offense while Yilian Cleger (18), Rachel Sanchez (13) and Yoana Palacios (11) also contributed in double digits to the victory. Argentineans Lucia Fresco and Antonela Bortolozzi each tallied 10 points.

Peru v Costa Rica
Peru defeated winless Costa Rica in a lopsided match (25-7, 25-7, 25-9) to finish with a 4-1 record in Pool B. The winners had a 9-0 advantage in both serve and blocking categories. Karla Ortiz topped the winners with 12 points while Patricia Soto added 8. Mirtha Soriano, Jessenia Uceda and Elena Keldibekova each contributed 7 points.

Dominican Republic v Canada
Dominican Republic defeated Canada 3-1 (23-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-14) to win second place of Pool A, with a 3-1 record. Dominican Jeoselyna Rodriguez came off the bench to lead her side with 15 points. Four other teammates finished in double figures as Prisilla Rivera, Annerys Vargas, Lisvel Eve and Milagros Cabral charted 14, 13, 12 and 10 points respectively. Canadian Sarah Pavan had a match-high 17 points while Tammy Mahon and Tonya Mokelki chipped in 13 and 11 tallies.

Puerto Rico v Trinidad & Tobago
Puerto Rico beat Trinidad & Tobago 3-0 (25-18, 25-19, 25-18) and finished in third place of Pool B. Shanon Torregrosa notched 10 points to lead the winners who benefited from 34 errors by their opponent while committing only 15. Puerto Rican Sarai Alvarez added nine. Trinidadians Kelly-Anne Billingy and Krystle Esdelle charted 11 and 10 points for the defeated side.

The final standings in the preliminary round pool play were as follows:

Pool A: Cuba (4-0), Dominican Republic (3-1), Argentina (2-2), Brazil (1-3), Canada (0-4).

Pool B: USA (5-0), Peru (4-1), Puerto Rico (3-2), Trinidad & Tobago (2-3), Mexico (1-4), Costa Rica (0-5).

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