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# Newsletter

## Olympic Games Bid at Stake in Long Beach

Long Beach, California, May 6, 2012 – Cuba and United States are the heavy favorites in the field as the No. 5 and No. 6 ranked teams in the FIVB world ranking. However, neither team is taking anything for granted in this crucial event.

Coaches of the eight teams expressed their feelings and goals prior to the start of the competition being held May 7-12 at the Walter Pyramid in Long Beach, California.

“NORCECA is always a strong tournament and we have to do our best to qualify for the Olympics,” Cuba Coach Orlando Samuels said. “We are well prepared for this event as we played matches versus Argentina a few weeks ago. The stages of preparations are complete and we are ready.”

“We are excited about what we have done in a short time after our players returned from their club teams,” United States Coach Alan Knipe said. “We had the opportunity to bring in Argentina for a couple exhibition matches and our Red-Blue scrimmage this past Friday. These matches provided us some things to shoot for and evaluation. We are excited to get started.”

“This is it,” Canada Coach Glenn Hoag said. “Our team has matured nicely. It is a young group with only a couple veterans. Our aim is to grow as a team and going to the Olympics would be great. We are taking this tournament one day at a time, one play at a time.”

Puerto Rico, which typically has fielded a strong team in NORCECA and FIVB events in the current Olympic quadrennial, has faced some adversity in its preparation for this tournament.

“The team is having some situations,” Puerto Rico coach Carlos Cardona said. “We were not able to have any friendly matches. Our best player, Hector Soto, has not recovered 100 percent from an injury, so our decision was to not bring him. How we finish in this tournament will depend on how his replacement, Ezequiel Cruz, and the 4 or 5 other young players compete.



I don't want to choose a favorite to win the tournament, but the strongest teams are USA, Cuba and Canada.”

“Our dream, and it is a dream, is to qualify for the Olympic Games,” Mexico Coach Jorge Miguel Azair said. “However, to play in the semifinals by finishing second in our pool is our goal. We know our team is not at the same level of Cuba and USA.”

“The Dominican Republic is bringing its best players – we are here to compete,” Dominican Republic Coach Jacinto Campechano said. “In each match we will be fighting to the death. We are in the strongest pool with Cuba, Canada and Puerto Rico. It may seem like David versus Goliath matches, but we don't think that way.”

“Technically, we have been practicing for three months,” Costa Rica Coach Cesar Salas said. “Our goal is to give our best efforts versus Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago, while giving a good match against the USA. Our mission is to finish second or third in Group A. Going into the tournament, I believe the USA is the favorite.”

“I know this tournament will be tough and competitive every day,” Trinidad & Tobago Coach Gideon Dickson said. “We would like to produce some surprises in this tournament. We are happy to represent our country and the Caribbean region at this tournament.”