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Newsletter

Canada-USA semi-final set up at U21 men's championship



GATINEAU, Canada, July 8, 2016 – Canada brushed up on some finer points while advancing to the semi-final of the U21 NORCECA Men's Continental Championship with a 3-0 win 3-0 (25-13, 25-14, 25-10) over Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The result creates a Canada-USA semi-final at 8 p.m. Saturday.

Canada was balanced in their hitting game, with seven points apiece coming via Pearson Eshenko (four kills, three blocks), Deanan Gyimah (five kills from six attacks, two blocks) and Eric Loeppky (six kills, one ace). Asmond Franklyn had a match-high eight points (including seven kills from 20 attacks) for Saint Vincent. Ronaldo Franklyn had seven points, (all from kills, on 21 attacks).

Canada converted on 29 of their 54 attacks, while Saint Vincent was 22 of 68. Canada's libero Jordan Pereira was credited with 10 digs.

"We know we have to be very, very disciplined against this team," Canada coach Gino Brousseau said. "Tonight was all about serving. [Thursday] night [during a loss against Cuba] we missed six serves just in the second set. So I told the guys, 'today I want you to be more disciplined' and they did it. Same thing for the game. They were very efficient and I am very pleased by the performance.

"The U.S. will be a good challenge – we'll probably be watching tape until late at night," Brousseau added. "They're a bit the same as us, with some players coming from high school and some from university; they have the same system as us. It's a 'classic,' Canada the U.S."

The loss to Cuba on Thursday put Canada on a path to meeting Team USA in the medal round. With a big edge against Saint Vincent in experience and height (11 cm per player), Friday's outing was about getting back to some basics.

"We've been looking forward to playing the U.S. – as a team, we've had them on our radar since we knew they would be in the tournament," Canadian outside hitter Eli Risso said. "We had a lot to prove in this game. Today just re-assured us we can play good system volleyball. We kind of got away from what we do. We played system ball like Gino wants us to do and we know we can win when we do that."

Saint Vincent was credited with only 18 successful service receptions, which was below the squad's expectations.

"Yesterday was better than today - we're making the same mistakes – reception, net errors, service," Saint Vincent captain Delshun Welcome said. "We have to score more points at the service line, at the net and blocking... the most important is the reception."

Saint Vincent, which will play in the fifth-place game at 4 p.m. Saturday. It will be a departure from their past two matchups against the North America tandem of Canada and Team USA.

"I think they played much better against the USA [on Thursday], than they did against Canada," Saint Vincent coach Vance Andrews said. "They are not used the conditions and the level of competition. They fight and I'm satisfied with the fight, but we have a lot to work on. Our reception is not how we want it, and service is not really there. I hope they take what they learn from this competition to go to the next level."

The final is on Sunday. Live stream is available.

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Guatemala beats Barbados, reaches U21 men's semi-final

GATINEAU, Canada, July 8, 2016 – Led by Erik Flores' 19 points, Guatemala earned a semi-final spot at the U21 NORCECA Men's Continental Championship by defeating Barbados 3-1 (25-21, 19-25, 25-21, 25-22) on Friday. The win gives the Central American side a chance to test their mettle against Cuba on Saturday.

Flores, who was icing his right hand after the spirited four-setter at Centre Sportif de Gatineau, had 17 kills on 39 attacks to help Guatemala hold off a determined comeback from Barbados, whose captain Andriy Stapleton left the game with a knee injury in the first set. Wagner Chacon also scored 17 points for Guatemala. In Stapleton's stead, Barbados received 18 points apiece from Carlos Cyrus (all on kills, from 42 attacks) and Adam Niles (who had seven blocks).

"We got motivated by the value of this game – we knew it was very important, giving us a chance to get two more games [semi-final and a medal game] against good teams," Flores said. "We know not too many countries of our region get the achievement of being in the semi-final.

"We feel excited for the fight we'll have on Saturday."