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# Newsletter

## United States and Mexico to battle in the gold medal match

NOGALES, Mexico, May 27, 2023.- United States and Mexico will battle in the gold medal match of the U21 Women's NORCECA Pan American Cup on Sunday in Nogales, Mexico.

Reigning champions United States arrived at the gold medal match with a 3-0 (25-15, 25-13, 25-20) win over Cuba in semifinals. Mexico's won the other semifinal 3-1 (26-24, 25-21, 24-26, 25-17) to Dominican Republic.

On the last day of competition, Guatemala and Belize will play for seventh place, Puerto Rico goes up against Costa Rica for fifth place, Dominicans and Cubas will battle for bronze followed by the gold medal match between United States and Mexico.

### Puerto Rico 3, Guatemala 1

Puerto Rico defeated Guatemala 3-1 (25-17, 25-14, 21-25, 25-9) to play for the fifth place. Puerto Rico will face the winner between Belize and Costa Rica on Sunday for the fifth place of the event; and Guatemala will go up against the losers for seventh place. Guatemala surprised Puerto Rico, leading the third set and reaching a comfortable five-point lead (21-16) to force a fourth and final set. Puerto Rico held a huge 12-5 advantage in serves, they also led 49-30 in kills and 13-11 in blocks.

Puerto Rico committed 19 unforced errors and Guatemala 22. Opposite hitter Grace Lopez continues to be one of Puerto Rico's top scorers, she finished with a match-high of 29 points on 21 kills, two blocks and a match-high of 6 aces. Outside hitter Elena García added 15 points on 13 kills, one block and one ace, followed by team captain Marcelle Baez with 14 points on 5 kills, a match-high of 7 monster blocks and two aces. Outside hitter Naomi Monney led Guatemala with 12 points on 7 kills, three blocks and two aces, joined by middle blocker Andrea Mendizabal with 11 points on 5 kills, 5 blocks and one ace.

### Costa Rica 3, Belize 0

Costa Rica will go for fifth place after defeating Belize in straight sets (25-20, 25-17, 25-20). This was Costa Rica's second tournament win, in the preliminaries they beat Guatemala and on Sunday they will battle against Puerto Rico for fifth place, while Belize takes on Guatemala for seventh. Costa Rica topped Belize in



attacks (38-30), in blocks (8-5) and in aces (6-3). Costa Rica committed 19 unforced errors against 23 from Belize. Opposite and team captain Angelica Rodriguez led Costa Rica scoring 11 points from 9 kills, one block and one ace. Outside hitter María Torres and middle blocker Nhya Barley tallied 8 and 6 points respectively. Belizean outside hitter Khaya Gordon led all scorers with 14 points on 10 kills, two blocks and two aces and outside hitter Gareth Bruce added 10 points all on kills.

### United States 3, Cuba 0

United States is headed to the gold medal match with a 3-0 (25-15, 25-13, 25-20) win over Cuba in semifinals. United States (4-0) will battle for gold against the winner between Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The U.S. was dynamic and dominant in aces 10-1. They also led 41-30 in kills and 7-6 in blocks. The Americans scored 17 points on Cuban errors while committing 11. Outside hitter Chloe Chicoine led all scorers with 16 points on 14 kills and two aces.

Middle blocker Gabrielle Essix added 8 points on a match-high of 5 blocks, two attacks and one ace. Opposite hitter Devin Kahahawai also scored 8 points on 7 kills and one block. Middle blocker Yalain De La Peña scored 11 points on 10 kills and one ace for Cuba. Middle blocker Yensy Kindelan and outside hitter Claudia Tarin added 7 points each.

### Mexico 3, Dominican Republic 1

Mexico's 3-1 (26-24, 25-21, 24-26, 25-17) win over Dominican Republic puts them in the gold medal match. Mexico (4-0) will play for Pan American Cup title against reigning champion United States (4-0).

Dominican Republic (3-2) will face Cuba (3-2) for third place. Mexico lost the third set despite their formidable recovery from a nine-point deficit (11-20) and then won the fourth and final set after missing five match points. Mexico won the neck-to-neck battle against Dominican Republic leading in attacks 55-48, in blocks 19-10 and a slight 7-6 margin in aces. Dominican Republic committed fewer errors (19-24).

Team captain Aime Topete led Mexico with 19 points on 15 kills and three blocks. Opposite Katherine Ramirez and middle blocker Arleth Marquez contributed with 18 points each; with Marquez scoring a match-high of seven blocks. Outside hitter Katielle Alonzo led Dominican Republic with 18 points on 17 kills and one ace, followed by opposite hitter Ariana Rodriguez with 14 points on 13 kills and one block. Middle blocker Estrella Punte scored 12 points on 7 kills and five blocks.

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