



2003 Norceca Women Continental Championship

Dominican Republic edged Canada in a five-setter

Santo Domingo.- The Dominican Republic needed a fifth set to beat a young Canada team and maintain an unbeating record in Pool A of the Norceca's Women Continental Championship, a qualifier event for the next World Cup.

Considered one of the housepowers in the region, the Dominicans used their experience to prevail in the tie-breaker (15-8) when the Canadians committed some unforced errors.

The Pan American Games' champions overcame a 0-1 deficit to take a 2-1 command only to see the Canadians coming back to tie the match on the shoulders of lefty Sarah Pavan's lightning spikes. Milagros Cabral led the Dominican's offense with 18 points and Yudelkis Bautista and Annerys Valdez added 12 each one.

The Dominicans won (22-25, 25-20, 25-21, 21-25, 15-8) and will face Trinidad & Tobago on Tuesday. "We have not played at the level we are supposed to," said Jorge Garbey, the Dominican coach, "but I feel confident of getting to the stage where we are aiming for." "We have to make some adjustments," he added, "but getting the victory today is a plus and now we have to start from there."



Pavan led all the scorers with 29 points for the Canadians and Amy Tutt had 20 and Barb Bellini 19. "We committed some unforced errors in key moments and that cost us the result," said Lorne Sawula, the Canadian coach. "The Dominicans are a great team but we are improving with every match."

In an earlier match, USA defeated Costa Rica 3-0 (25-11, 25-11, 25-19) in its debut in the tournament. Danielle Scott had 15 points and Heather Bown 13 for the Americans and Verania Willis led the Costa Rican with 10. "It is a fairly start for us," said Toshi Yoshida, the American coach. "We did it OK considering it was our first match." Scott, the American's captain, said: "We are looking to win every match and the tournament, but it won't be easy because there are some good participating teams."

In the first match of the day, Puerto Rico defeated Trinidad & Tobago 3-0 (25-15, 25-14, 25-21). "This is a chance to evaluate the group of players we brought here," said David Aleman, the Puerto Rican coach. "Playing more games means more chances for experience to our team."

Three players of Puerto Rico -Wilma Bassini, Yarimar Rosa and Omayra George- each had 12 points and Kelly Billingsy scored 17 for Trinidad & Tobago. "We are in a learning experience," said Macsood Ali, "but I can day that Kelly is as talented as they are in this championship."

