



## 2003 Norceca Women Continental Championship

### NORCECA Women Continental Championship start on Sunday

The 2003 Norceca Women Continental Championship, a qualifier to the World Cup in Japan, start this Sunday with three matches in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Seven teams from the region will battle for two berths in the event of November in Japan, the first qualifier for the Olympic Games next year in Athens.

Mexico announced its withdrawal of the competition and that leaves the Pool B with three teams –USA, Cuba and Costa Rica.

The participating squads in Pool A are: Dominican Republic, Canada, Puerto Rico and Trinidad & Tobago.

USA, entering the competition with its first team, is considered the favorite and the strongest side of the tournament. Cuba and Dominican Republic complete the housepowers of the event. Canada and Trinidad will play the first match at 4:00 pm (local time) followed by Cuba vs Costa Rica (6:00 om) and Dominican Republic against Puerto Rico (8:00 pm) in the nightcap.

All the games will be in national television and the games of Dominican Republic will be aired in two different stations. Volleyball has experienced a huge boom in the country after the gold medal won by the local team in the Pan American Games defeating Cuba in five sets. Capacity crowds are

expected in the Volleyball Pavillion in the Juan Pablo Duarte Olympic Centre.

The top team in each pool automatically advances to the tournament semifinals, scheduled for September 18.

The teams ranked second and third at the conclusion of pool play will play cross-over matches on September 17 (2A vs. 3B, 2B vs. 3A), with the winners advancing to the semifinals and the losers doing battle for fifth place

on September 18.

The winner of the Cuba-USA match is likely to determine who will win Pool B and earn a quick trip to the semifinals. Dominican Republic is a heavy favorite in Pool A.

