



NORCECA WOMEN'S OLYMPIC QUALIFIER TOURNAMENT



Cuba is once again in the Olympics

Cuba joined China, Brazil, United States and Greece as one of the women teams already with berth in the next Olympic Games after trouncing Dominican Republic in only 65 minutes by the score of 25-18, 25-18, 25-11.

It was an artistic and powerful performance from the three time Olympic champions and tonight there was no doubt which was the best team on the court. Veterans Zoila Barros and Yumilka Ruiz had 15 and 14 points respectively and emerging stars Nancy Carrillo and Yaima Ortiz had 9 points apiece. For the Dominicans, Kenia Moreta and Milagros Cabral scored 9 apiece.

"We are very happy with this

victory and one place in the Olympics," said Luis Felipe Calderon. "We came here with that in mind and made it happen. Our athletes put their best effort and you have to give them all the credit," he added. "We worked very hard in our service game and today it carried us to the victory."

Jorge Garbey, the Dominican coach, praised the Cuban squad saying "the team who played better won the match. It was also the team with deeper fighting spirit.

"We now have to prepare to play against Argentina, Peru and Venezuela on January in our last chance to make the Olympics," said Garbey. "We have defeated them recently but we need

to keep the concentration in the Christmas period in order to accomplish that goal."

Canada wins the bronze medal

Canada won the bronze medal of the NORCECA Women's Olympic Qualifier defeating Puerto Rico in consecutive sets by score of 25-15, 25-20, 25-15.

"We hung together and our blocking was pretty good and our vacuum cleaner did the rest of the job," said coach Lorne Sawula in reference to libero Annie Levesque. "I am very proud of my team and the way we bounced back after the loss against Dominican Republic. It was a good way to end the tournament," said Anne Marie Lemieux, the Canadian captain. "Our team played very well tonight and our blocking was solid."

Levesque said: "We are a very young team and we will be together for the next four years when another chance to make the Olympics will come."

David Aleman, the Puerto Rican coach, was very dissatisfied with the overall performance of his side and said: "The team lacked desire and did not have motivation."

The same opinion was offered by Xiomara Molero, the captain of Puerto Rico. "The team did not play up to its capacity but it is only the end of a cycle and the start of another one. I only have to congratulate the Canadians for the bronze medal," Molero said.

Sarah Pavan led the Canadians with 12 points and Stephanie Wheeler added 11.