



NORCECA WOMEN'S OLYMPIC QUALIFIER TOURNAMENT

Dominican Republic maintains a perfect record

The Dominican Republic kept its perfect record in the NORCECA's Women Olympic Qualifier with a 3-0 victory over Puerto Rico. The score was 25-22, 25-21, 25-20. Cosiris Rodriguez and Yudelkis Bautista were the best players for the host squad who faces Cuba on Thursday. The Cubans had an off-day.

The veteran Rodriguez closed the first set with a couple of cannon shots and was successful in 13 of 20 attempts finishing with 14 points. Bautista had 12 points. "I think the key of the match was the Dominican blocking," said David Aleman, the Puerto Rican coach.

Annerys Vargas had five of her 9 points with the blocks and she is leading the tournament in that department.



"Puerto Rico is a good team who relies on the fundamentals and they always elevate their game against our squad," said Jorge Garbey, the Dominican coach. "It was a close match but we prevailed with our service and the blocking to close the sets."

Eva Cruz had 12 points and Karina Ocasio added 10 for the Puerto Ricans who are 0-2 and now have to play against Mexico and Canada. "We made many mistakes against Cuba and reduce them tonight," said Aleman. "I hope we can keep lowering the errors and have better games the rest of the tournament."

Canada got its first triumph

Canada had a game of peak and valleys but found the way to defeat Mexico in consecutive sets for its first victory in the NORCECA's Women Olympic Qualifier keeping alive the chances to make the semifinal phase.

The Canadians had to overcome a 23-20 deficit in the first set to prevail 27-25. The North Americans came back strong in the second set that saw them overmatch the Mexicans 25-8. The third set was tied at 19, when Sarah Pavan and Barb Bellini responded with solid shots to five Canada the match finishing 25-20.

"Mexico played great in the first set and gave us a lot of problems, but we made the key points to erase the deficit," said Lorne Sawula, the Canadian coach. "I am very proud of the way my team responded in a must win situation and the way they handled the pressure."

Jorge Azair, the Mexican coach, said: "We played a good first set with our service and defense, but at the end we committed some mistakes and we let the set to escape. The result of the second set was a consequence of the first and my team lost the concentration. We came back in the third and played evenly with the Canadians but once again our reception failed in the late stages."

Pavan led all the scorers with 16 points, Bellini added 14 and Melissa Raymond had 13. For the Mexicans, Martha Revuelta scored 14.