



NORCECA WOMEN'S OLYMPIC QUALIFIER TOURNAMENT



Pavan guides Canada with big bombs

Big Sarah Pavan had her best game of the tournament thus far and led Canada to a 3-0 victory over Puerto Rico in the final day of the preliminary round in NORCECA Women's Olympic Qualifier in Santo Domingo.

The lefthander Pavan scored 27 points and was successful in 25 of 41 attacks and Canada won 25-17, 25-22, 28-26. Bard Bellini had 12 points and Amy Tutt added 10.

"There is a long history of battle between these two teams and I knew that the Puerto Ricans were not going to give up," said Lorne Sawula,

the Canadian coach. "I am very proud of my team, how the girls battled all the way."

Canada will meet the Dominican Republic in one of the two semifinal matches on Saturday. Cuba will face Puerto Rico. "We have to play the match of a lifetime to beat the Dominicans but I will see which kind of tactics we can use to surprise them," said Sawula. "My top priority is to play a steady game."

However, Tutt is not conceding the advantage to the Dominicans. "They are already talking about a match against Cuba on Sunday, but they better have to prepare for tomorrow against us," she said.

Sheila Ocasio and Eva Cruz scored 11 points apiece for Puerto Rico and Karina Ocasio added 10.

Cuba is 4-0 after crushing Mexico

Cuba finished the preliminary round of the NORCECA Women's Olympic Qualifier with an unbeaten record and is in good shape for its next compromises during the weekend in Santo Domingo.

Tonight the three time Olympic Champions had a picnic day against Mexico gaining the victory 25-11, 25-13, 25-9 in just 53 minutes. Cuba ended with 4-0 record while the Mexicans were

the other side of the coin exiting the event with 0-4. Yaima Ortiz showed her overall ability with 19 points that included 10 spikes, 5 blocks and 4 serves, and Nancy Carrillo, who finished with 13, had 6 spikes, 2 blocks and 5 aces. Marta Revuelta led the Mexicans with 7 points.



Cuban Coach Luis Felipe Calderon was so confident about the victory that he did not use his ace player Yumilka Ruiz during the match. "It was an easy game for us and that permitted to rest some of my key players and rotate the bench," said Calderon.

"We are prepared for the next two rounds and hopefully get the berth in the Olympics and all my players are in good physical condition and mentally ready for the challenge, he said.