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Puerto Rico reaches FIVB World League Qualification Tournament

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, May 27, 2010 – Puerto Rico overcame Canada in a five-setter thriller (25-23, 17-25, 25-22, 28-30, 16-14) and booked a ticket in the FIVB Qualification Tournament for the 2011 World League.

The victory also sent the home team to the semifinals of the Men's Pan American Cup alongside Argentina, Brazil and USA, teams already qualified to this year's world event.

In the Friday's semifinal phase, Puerto Rico will face Argentina and United States will play Brazil. Elsewhere, Colombia and Mexico will decide the seventh place.

In the rest of the action of Thursday, USA swept Dominican Republic in the other quarterfinal match and Colombia overcame Venezuela in five sets in the competition for the 7-9 positions.

Puerto Rico vs Canada

Puerto Rico edged Canada as Roberto Muñiz, subbing for injured star Hector Soto, responded with 24 points to lead the winning offense and Victor Rivera contributed 23 points. Jose Rivera recorded 16 including one service ace for the decisive point in the tie-breaker. Gavin Schmitt and Steve Gotch had 19 and 17 respectively for Canada.

"I had the responsibility to fill the big shoes of Hector Soto and I feel real happy to have delivered," Muñiz said during the press conference. "I think the team with more desire won tonight and we wanted to win for our home fans."

USA vs Dominican Republic

USA dispatched Dominican Republic in straight sets (25-14, 25-18, 25-18) and will face Brazil in one of Friday's semifinal matches. The winners had the advantage in blocking (9-4) and also in the serves category (7-3).

The Dominicans will play now for the fifth place against the losers of the other quarterfinals contest between Canada and hosts Puerto Rico later on Thursday.

Jayson Jablonski led USA with 12 points, Robert Tarr added 11, including three blocks and two aces, and Carson Clark contributed 9 points. Dominican Jose Caceres topped the defeated team with 11 points.

"These two teams have played each other many times and it was a good battle," American Coach Richard McLaughlin said. "We started well and kept it going with good serves."

Colombia vs Venezuela

Colombia claimed a comeback victory over Venezuela in five sets (25-22, 19-25, 21-25, 25-21, 17-15) advancing to a match against Mexico for the seventh place.

Carlos Mosquera and Ronald Jiménez topped Colombia with 17 and 15 points respectively. Venezuelans Kervin Pinerua and Alejandro Sanoja finished with 23 and 22 points, and Henderon Espinoza charted 18 tallies.

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