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II Women Volleyball Pan American Cup in Saltillo, Mexico.



Dominican Republic beat Cuba, USA defeat Brazil

Dominican Republic edged Cuba in a thrilling five-setter advancing to the gold medal match against USA in the Women's Pan American Cup being played in Saltillo, Mexico.

The Dominicans came from behind to erase a 0-2 deficit and won an agonizing tie-breaker 17-15 before an almost capacity crowd that clearly was in favor of the Cubans. The score was 24-26, 23-25, 25-21, 25-16, 17-15.

USA defeated the young Brazilian squad 3-1 using only regulars Nancy Metcalf and Lindsey in its starting team. The experience of the Americans was a factor in the deciding moments. The score was 25-20, 22-25, 25-20, 25-16.

In the match for fifth place, Venezuela beat Canada. "It is a moment of mixed emotions. I have a great sensation,"

said Jorge Garbey, the coach of Dominican Republic and native of Cuba. "I really don't know either laugh or cry. Is a great triumph for Dominican volleyball."

Luis Felipe Calderon, the Cuban coach gave credit for the victory saying that "they (Dominicans) have been preparing for many years and today it paid its dividends."

Cuba was in command 2-0 and looked like the defending champions were in route to the victory.

With the offense of Zoila Barros and contribution from Anniara Munoz, Cuba took the first set. Barros again, now with help from Martha Sanchez, was a key ingredient in the second set outcome.

The Dominicans reacted in the third set with the spikes of slender Yudelkis Bautista, of 193 cm, and the smart play of stocky but agile setter Francia Jackson. The powerful attacks of Milagros Cabral decided the one-sided fourth set.

In the tie-breaker, the Dominicans jumped to a 10-6 lead with a sensational performance from Bautista. Cuba reacted to level the score 15-15, but two spikes of Cosiris Rodriguez sealed the historic victory over the super power of the Caribbean.

Rodriguez had 15 points and Bautista 14 for Dominican Republic. Yaima Ortiz had 18 and Sanchez 17 for Cuba.

Saturday's matches

Brazil vs Cuba for the bronze medal.

USA vs Dominican Republic for the gold medal