



II Women Volleyball Pan American Cup in Saltillo, Mexico.



Pan American starts today with four matches

The Second Women's Volleyball Pan American Cup starts this Monday with four matches in Saltillo, Mexico. Eight teams of the Americas will be battling to gain four available places in next year World Grand Prix.

The top South American squad will also qualify if one does not finish in the top four. All the games will be played at The Convention Center of Coahuila with the first encounter featuring Puerto Rico against Canada while USA entertains Brasil in Group A. Cuba meets Venezuela and Mexico faces Dominican Republic in Group B.

The Cubans are being considered as the favorites before the tournament with USA as strong rivals, so a tight battle is anticipated for the remaining two places in the 2004 premier women FIVB competition. Brazil is also a strong contender.

Puerto Rico beat Dominican Republic in the World Championship in Germany and Mexico defeated the Dominicans in the Mexicali Cup this year, but the host team of the Pan American Games gained victories against both squads in the Central American and Caribbean Games in El Salvador last November. Venezuela is taking its first step in this event and is a longshot. Mexico have been the most active team

in the friendly matches before the competition, losing its three matches.

The Mexicans lost a close match with Brazil 21-25, 25-18, 25-17, 24-22 on Saturday and had a couple of encounters on Sunday. In the morning the locals lost to Canada in four sets (25-16, 21-25, 25-22, 25-22) and later in the day lost four consecutive sets against the Cubans by scores of 25-23, 25-21, 25-19 and 25-23.

Mexico have been host of both editions of the Pan American Cup. Last year in Ensenada and Tijuana, Baja California, Cuba defeated Dominican Republic in four sets in the match for the gold medal.

Originally, the Pan American Cup was to be played in Argentina, but the site was moved when the Argentinian Volleyball Federation and his President Mario Goijman were expeled by the FIVB for violations against the Code of Conduct and the rules of the Volleyball governing body.

