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## 2003 Norceca Women Continental Championship

### Cuba and USA qualify for the World Cup

Cuba and USA used different paths but both qualified for the Women's World Cup in Japan. While the Cubans had to battle during five sets against the Dominican Republic, the Americans blanked Canada.

The Cubans saw the host Dominicans coming from a 0-2 deficit to tie the match before dominating the tie-breaker. On the other side, the Americans had no problems to defeat the young Canadians.

Cuba won (25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 20-25, 15-11) and USA triumphed (25-16, 25-19, 25-16). "It was the kind of match we were expecting," said Luis Felipe Calderon, the Cuban coach. "Both sides have a lot of talent and once again the Dominicans showed their improvement. Now we have a big responsibility in the World Cup against the best teams," he added. "We have the chance to qualify for the Olympics but still we have another chance in the Continental Pre-Olympic to be staged here in Santo Domingo in December."

About the match for the gold medal against USA on Friday, Calderon said: "We played five sets against USA before losing in the preliminary round and we won today against the Dominicans also in a five-setter. I will be satisfied



if we can repeat those performances in the final match." Yumilka Ruiz led the Cubans with 22 points and Zoila Barros added 16. Annerys Vargas had 15, Cosiris Rodriguez 14 and Yudelkis Bautista 13 for the Dominicans.

Logan Tom led the American attack with 17 points, Prikeba Phipps and Nancy Metcalf had 14 and 13 respectively. Barb Bellini scored 10 for Canada. "We still have a lot of space to improve," said USA coach Toshi Yoshida. "Our team have been playing with up and downs and need to maintain a certain level of consistency. All the sets were pretty even until 15 and then somehow we could find the rhythm and prevailed," he added.

Danielle Scott, the USA captain, about the Cuba match on Friday: "As I said before, it will be very competitive. There are three very strong teams here, Cuba, Dominican Republic and USA, and I anticipate a tough battle for the gold. On the other hand, I feel very happy qualifying for the World Cup and hope to be a good representative of the Norceca region."

In an earlier match for the fifth place, Puerto Rico defeated Costa Rica in five sets by score of (25-19, 20-25, 25-20, 19-25, 15-13). Puerto Rican Yarimar Rosa had 20 points and Verania Willis 23 for Costa Rica.

