



2003 Norceca Women Continental Championship

USA wins the gold medal, Cuba and Dominican Republic followed

USA conquered the gold medal of the Norceca Continental Women's Championship with a convincing victory in straight sets over Cuba, completing an outstanding performance mixing power with finesse during the tournament.

The Americans played almost flawless volleyball for two sets and then showed enough talent and character to stop a Cuban surge in the third to win 25-22, 25-17, 30-28.

"We achieved the two goals we were aiming for," said Danielle Scott, the USA captain, "first qualifying for the World Cup and then winning the gold medal."

"It wasn't easy because the Cubans presented a tough battle in the third set, but we combined to get the victory. They played with a lot of desire and heart but we found the way to prevail," she said.

"This is basically the team representing USA in the World Cup," said Toshi Yoshida, the American

coach. "There are some things we need to improve but we played very consistent for the first two sets and somehow found the way to win the third one. Our block was OK for the first two sets and the third was disputed when they hit some huge and accurated spikes," he added.

Prikeba Phipps was the best attacker for USA with 15 points, followed by Logan Tom and Scott with 12 and 10 respectively. Yumilka Ruiz and Yaima Ortiz had 1 apiece for the Cubans.

Luis Felipe Calderon, the Cuban coach said: "Our

team played below par during most of the match and we knew it would be a very tough game. We reacted in the third but we lacked the consistency and USA have a good team who commits few mistakes."

In the match for the bronze medal, the Dominican Republic defeated Canada in straight sets 25-22, 25-19, 25-21. Cosiris Rodriguez led the host squad with 14 points and Yudelkis Bautista added 13. Sarah Pavan had 13 for Canada.

"I am satisfied with the bronze medal and the way my team played in the

semifinals going five sets against Cuba," said Dominican coach Jorge Garbey. "We know now that we can play the Cubans pretty even and nobody can predict the outcome."

Francia Jackson, the Dominican captain said: "Tonight we went out most determined and everyone contributed."

Lorne Shawula, the Canadian coach, added: "Dominican Republic is one of the powers in the region and today we couldn't match up their play. I congratulate them and also the organizers of a very good tournament."

