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## Panama and Honduras to battle for the title



TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras. December 18, 2004, - Panama took another step toward revalidating their regional title with a 3-1 victory over Costa Rica in the sixth day of action of the XIII Men's Volleyball Central American Cup.

The Panamanians dominated the first two sets by score of 25-14, 25-11 but Costa Rica improved the rest of the way winning the third set 25-20 before losing the match 27-25.

Domingo Avila and Jose Cunningham led the attack of Panama with solid spikes and their coach Jose Remon was very satisfied with the way his side performed. "We beat a good team with high technique," said Remon. "We won because we played a fastest game than Costa Rica. Now we are prepared for Honduras and to keep the title."

Winners of five previous regional tournaments, the Panamanians arrive to the last match of the competition with similar unbeaten record (5-0) as host Honduras. These teams will dispute the crown this afternoon with the winner automatically getting a ticket for the next year NORCECA Continental Championship to be played in Winnipeg, Canada.

Both squads are very optimistic as they approach the gold medal match to be played before a packed house in the Gymnasium of the Tegucigalpa Olympic Village. "The Hondurans have very much improved their level and the fans also have helped them with their support," said Cunningham, the lefthander star of Panama. "All



can say is that it is going to be a good game."

"We are not completely satisfied with the way we have played so far," added Cunningham. "But we feel content with the victories and hope to play our best in the gold medal match."

Felix Sabio, who has excelled in all the wins of Honduras, praised the Panama team who he considers a tough opponent.

"They are the defending champions with basically the same team as in 2002, with one or two different players," said Sabio. "They are the rival we were expecting. Panama comes very hungry after the title but we have the same feeling. We are in the right place with the right people."

In the other matches on Friday, Nicaragua defeated Guatemala by score of 25-18, 25-23 and 25-20 and El Salvador beat Belize 25-21, 25-18, 25-20. Today Costa Rica plays Nicaragua, Guatemala goes against Belize and Honduras meets Panama.

The rankings after six days: Panama (5-0), Honduras (5-0), Costa Rica (3-2), Nicaragua (2-3), Guatemala (1-4), El Salvador (2-4) and Belize 0-5.

