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Canadians Nusbaum and Plantinga reach semifinals defeating Cuba

16/04/2018



Canadians Aaron Nusbaum and Mike Plantinga upset top seeded Karel Peña and Dasiel Quesada of Cuba with a 2-0 (21-15, 21-15) victory to reach the men's semifinals of the first stage of the 2018 NORCECA Beach Volleyball Circuit in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Mike Plantinga's high blocks and Aaron Nusbaum's effective defense took the Cuban pair by surprise, limiting their performance to a lower standard than usual.

Another surprise was Josué Gaxiola/José Angel Cardenas of Mexico advancing into semifinals with a steady performance while beating Canada-B of Fiodar Kazhamiaka/ Sergey Grabovsky 2-0 (21-15, 21-18) in quarterfinals. Gaxiola has earned one silver and two bronze NORCECA medals and Cardenas is a NORCECA newcomer; together they finished fifth last year at the FIVB U-21 World Championship.

United States-A of William Reid Priddy and Troy Field had to use all their energy to beat resilient Rubén Mora/Dany López of Nicaragua coming from behind 2-1 (25-27, 21-15, 15-11). Mora and López had a spectacular performance while Priddy and Field seemed to enjoy the challenge.

Eric Zaun and Edwin Ratledge of United States-B won their quarterfinal match with no problems to young Dominicans Jamel Alessandre/Victor Castillo by 2-0 (21-15, 21-15).

Plantinga/Nusbaum (CAN) will meet Gaxiola/Cardenas (MEX) in semifinals. The other semifinal features Priddy/Field against fellow countrymen Zaun/Ratledge.

Men's semifinal matches are scheduled for 10:30 am (local time) and the gold medal match at 5:30 pm.

Men Results Saturday:

Pool-Play: Pool A: Karel Peña/ Dasiel Quesada (CUB) d Jamel Alessandre/Victor Castillo (DOM) 2-0 (21-13, 21-11); Pool B: Eric Zaun/Edwin Ratledge (USA-B) d Aaron Nusbaum/ Mike Plantinga (CAN-A) 2-1 (21-91, 15-21, 18-16); Pool C: Fiodar Kazhamiaka/ Sergey Grabovsky (CAN-B) d Luis García/Erick Garrido (GUA) 2-0 (21-19, 21-18); William Reid Priddy/Troy Field (USA-A) d Germán Osuna/Leonel Garza (MEX-B) 2-0 (21-15, 21-11); Pool D: Josue Gaxiola/José Angel Cardenas (MEX-A) d Rubén Mora/Dany López (NCA) 2-0 (21-15, 21-14); Yasutaka Sanay/Franky Hernández (MEX-C) d Jesse Parham/Casey Santamaria (CAY) 2-0 (21-9, 21-13); Loser's Play-Off: Germán Osuna/Leonel Garza (MEX-B) d Yasutaka Sanay/Franky Hernández (MEX-C) 2-0 (18-21, 21-19, 16-14); Luis García/Erick Garrido (GUA) d Jesse Parham/Casey Santamaria (CAY) 2-0 (21-7, 21-10); QF1: Aaron Nusbaum/ Mike Plantinga (CAN-A) d Karel Peña/ Dasiel Quesada (CUB) 2-0 (21-15, 21-15); QF2: Josue Gaxiola/José Angel Cardenas (MEX-A) d Fiodar Kazhamiaka/ Sergey Grabovsky (CAN-B) 2-0 (21-15, 21-18); QF3: William Reid Priddy/Troy Field (USA-A) d Rubén Mora/Dany López (NCA) 2-1 (25-27, 21-15, 15-11); QF4: Eric Zaun/Edwin Ratledge (USA-B) d Jamel Alessandre/Victor Castillo (DOM) 2-0 (21-15, 21-15).