

Cuba wins tournament and qualify to World Final

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Cuba defeated Costa Rica 3-0 (25-13, 25-16, 25-16), and was crowned as undefeated champion earning the only ticket awarded by the Norceca Men's Challenger Cup to the World Final, a qualifier to the 2019 FIVB League of Nations.

At Sala 19 de Noviembre, what could have seemed a lopsided game from the difference of level between both sides, was a lively meeting after the hosts cruised in the first set with regular team and the head coach began to use his substitutes to give them chances of playing.

Cuba concluded with four wins in a row and those of Costa Rica without success, but won the opportunity to meet with adversaries of higher level and experience.

The top scorer of the match was the opposite Miguel Ángel López (15), the only Cuban to play in a club in Italy, followed by the new attacker Marlon Yang (11), while for the Central Americans the one in double digits was also the opposite Gilberth Solano (13).

Nicolás Vives, technical director of the hosts, declared that "we have not played much as a team and we need to do it with anybody, it is important the cohesion of the group, the combination of receipt, pass and attack. In general my team is young and the new players a lot more and they require a lot of play. Each tournament is important and we will make the same use of the World Final because we are determined to win the gold at the Central American and Caribbean Games."

Corner attacker Marlon Yang, a young promise of 2.02 meters and only 17 years old, was chosen to comment on behalf of his team and said that "the game really was to move, we have to play, despite being easy rivals we got complicated because we relaxed and fell in their game, and that cannot happen to us. I liked the tournament and the team from Guatemala caught my attention, it does not have much level, but it was brave, it was delivered".

The Cuban José Enrique Pavón, DT of Costa Rica said that "the local team is out of league in this competition, there could be no pretense to beat them, but to give a nice show and they did, enjoyed their game and although it was not always the regular squad against, also the bench is very good. The Cup left a great lesson to mine and especially today, they need to work much more to get as far as they set out, but we must understand that several of these players work or study and it is not easy to do systematic work ".

Andres Araya, leader of the Central Americans, said that "it was a very nice experience for the group with little international experience, we played as we wanted to do it in the whole tournament and we could not, without pressure, with the desire to win no matter who we were facing. I was proud to do it in front of a world power and do it well, to demand that they do their best to win, we are very happy, we loved the tournament and the Cuban people, it has been all beautiful."

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