
Canada falters against a determined Cuban team

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Canada started strong, but lost momentum after the first set to fall to Cuba 1-3 (25-17, 22-25, 22-25, 19-25) in the first semifinal of the Men's 2019 NORCECA Continental Championship today in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Canada led in blocking (12-10), but Cuba led in service points (9-7) and attacks (50-43).

Miguel Lopez led all scorers with 21 points for the winning team. He was followed by teammates Marlon Yant (15) and Osniel Mergarejo (13).

For Canada, Stephen Maar contributed 17 points. Nick Hoag and Sharone Vernon-Evans had 11 apiece.

Cuba will face the winner of USA vs Mexico in the gold medal match on Saturday. Canada will face the loser in the bronze game.

Cuba head coach Yosvany Muñoz Perez:

"I am happy because of this victory. Our team had a very high level performance today, especially in our serving, we had very strong service today. Congratulations to Canada, they are a good team. Now we want to see who wins between Mexico and the USA and then we will study the video. We want to be prepared for tomorrow."

#13 Cuban middle blocker, Robertlandy Simon:

"When we win, we are happy. We are here and trying to win, but the most important thing is to get to the Olympics. January is what will really count.

Today, our service was very good, and they had some difficulty with reception. We played well after the first set."

Canada's head coach Glenn Hoag:

"We played a great first set, in all aspects, especially in our serving. In the second set, we completely lost momentum because we committed too many service errors early in the second set, and Cuba started playing better. ... We haven't played Cuba in a long time, so it was good to see what they can do. We have to be ready for January. ...It's just a question of working on a few things, especially our serving flaws versus our block defense, and I think we will be ready. But for now, we will worry about tomorrow."
