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Dominicans win NORCECA Title in five thrilling sets to USA

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Dominican Republic won NORCECA Women's Continental Championship to United States in five thrilling sets 3-2 (25-19, 25-23, 15-25, 20-25, 15-9) on Sunday night at Roberto Clemente Coliseum of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Dominican Republic finishes the tournament with 4-1 record serving United States their only loss of the tournament 4-1; Dominicans have lost to the U.S. in the preliminary round. This is the fourth time Dominicans and the U.S. battle for the NORCECA title and the first time Dominicans come out on top winning their second gold medal in the history of the event.

Dominicans offense and defense over the net, as well as receiving skills were solid, from the beginning. Outside hitter Brayelin Martinez was unstoppable but the U.S. reaction did not come light, bouncing back 0-2 for the overtime on a formidable display of speed.

Dominican Republic led 11-9 in blocks and allowed 19 points on errors against 29; the U.S. held a 69-58 advantage in kills and a 4-2 margin in aces.

Dominicans leading scorers were Brayelin Martinez with 20 points on 20 kills and 4 blocks, followed by Bethania De La Cruz with 19 points and Lisvel Eve added 11 points. Michelle Barsch-Hackley of USA scored a match-high of 26 points, Kelsey Robinson and Andrea Drews tallied 13 and 12 points accordingly.

Prisilla Rivera, captain of Dominican Republic: "It has been a rough year for us, many events,

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lots of work, lots of suffering and finishing this way is the icing on top, I am very proud of my team. We could have finished 3-0 but United States is one of the best teams in the world and wasn't going to give up easily. Our best skill was team effort; we had a moment of distraction when they started to pressure with serves".

Marcos Kwiek, Head Coach of Dominican Republic: "Today we faced an elite team, it wasn't easy. We lack money, we lack structure, among other things, but we have big hearts. My players battled a lot and it was a spectacular way to close the year; they worked a lot, it was a difficult year and we are happy that none of the players were injured, it's a blessing".

Karch Kiraly, Head Coach of United States: "Well played match from Dominican Republic, congratulations to them".

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