

Brazil, Italy and Cuba join Serbia in FIVB Men's World Championship 2010 top four semifinals

Rome, Italy, October 6, 2010 – Two-times defending champions Brazil will play Italy while 1998 bronze medalists Cuba will take on Serbia in two fascinating FIVB Men's World Championship Italy 2010 semifinals (positions 1-4) which will be held at the Palalottomatica in Rome on Saturday following gripping drama on the final day of the third round on Wednesday. With Serbia having already qualified for the semis on Tuesday, Brazil beat Germany 3-0 (25-17, 25-20, 25-19) in Rome to comfortably wrap up a semifinal spot before two exquisite "quarterfinal" matches which saw Cuba come from behind against Bulgaria to snatch a sensational 3-2 (22-25, 25-23, 26-28, 30-28, 15-11) win in Florence. At the same time in Rome, Italy did what they had to do against France, that is win 3-1 (25-18, 25-20, 25-27, 25-19), but not without its drama as the 2009 European Championship runner's up didn't go down easily.

It will be a Europe v Americas battle in Saturday's semifinals. Two of the most successful sides in the history of the World Championships will meet in the second semifinal in Rome with world No. 1 Brazil having won two titles and a silver medal while world No. 5 Italy are three-time champions from 1990-1998 while picking up second place in 1978. In the second semifinal, Serbia, 1998 silver medalists and ranked fourth in the world, will play world No. 8 and three-time medalists (one silver and two bronze) Cuba. Serbia and Cuba are yet to win the title. Three of the four semifinalists finished in the top five in 2006 with Brazil taking the title while Serbia finished fourth and Italy fifth. Cuba, finished 15th.

The semifinals for places 5-8 will take place in Modena with Russia playing Bulgaria and USA taking on Germany, while Florence will host the semifinal playoffs for positions 9-12 with Argentina playing Spain and France taking on the Czech Republic.

Pool R in Rome

Brazil beat Germany 3-0 (25-17, 25-20, 25-19)

It was like a regular day at the office for the boys from Brazil as the reigning world champions advanced to the semifinal round of the FIVB Men's World Championship after a convincing straight sets win over Germany in Pool R at the Palalottomatica. The South American powerhouse produced probably their best match of the tournament to crush their European opponents. They out-served Germany 5-1 in aces and edged them 3-2 in blocks. Murilo and Vissotto led Brazil with 13 and 11 points respectively, with Murilo recording two service winners. Dante added nine points and Lucas eight. Jochen Schops was the only German to reach double figures with 10 points. "We played very well, and were technically precise," Brazil captain Giba said. "We watched many videos to study our opponent, so we were prepared to face them. Now we need to relax and focus on the semifinal. Italy have an excellent blocking mechanism and defense. It will be fantastic to play against the home team in this particular venue." Germany's Christian Dunnes said: "Brazil played a good match and deserved to win. We did the best we could to arrive at this point. The opponents applied the pressure immediately which stopped us from playing 100 per cent, even though our 100 per cent would not have defeated Brazil today."

Pool O in Rome

Italy beat France 3-1 (25-18, 25-20, 25-27, 25-19)

Italy beat France for the 32nd time in 52 matches to record an outstanding victory full of character in front of more than 11,000 spectators at PalaLottomatica. Simone Parodi and Cristian Savani compiled 18 and 16 points to lead the Italian attack while veteran Luigi Mastrangelo contributed 12 points including five of Italy's 13 blocks.

Romain Vadeleux registered 17 points for France while Nicolas Marechal and Kevin Le Roux recorded 13 and 11 respectively. With France having little chance of qualifying due to a small points ratio, a defeat for Italy would only give USA the chance to advance to the elite four semifinals but Italy did what was required to guarantee their best ever

finish since winning the last of their World Championship titles in 1998. Philippe Blain's side now face the playoffs for 9-12 which represent's France's worst finish since 1982. USA, second in the group, will play off for positions 5-8 representing their best finish since a bronze medal in 1994. "It was an intense match and quite difficult," Italy captain Valerio Vermiglio said. "We started out strong, but later lost our concentration which made us nervous and we failed to react immediately. With the help of our coach who incited us, we managed to regain our concentration and played in unison." France coach Philippe Blain said: "We knew prior to the match that we could not win, and the fact that they played in an incredible manner and the public cheered them on continuously helped them out. We encountered a few difficulties, but after managed to regain confidence. Our team is united and used to playing in unison and we can thank our Libero for a great match."

Pool P in Florence

Russia beat Argentina 3-0 (25-22, 25-17, 25-15)

Russia beat Argentina for the 10th time in 11 matches to continue their running run over their South American opponents since the 1990 World Championship in the final Pool P match of the 2010 FIVB Men's World Championship. Victory assured Russia of a place in the 5-8 classification round in Modena while Argentina will remain in Florence to compete in the 9-12 round. The Russian scoring was led by their leading scorer Maxim Mikhaylov with 13 points, while Dmitriy Muserskiy added nine including three aces. Argentina's best scorer in the tournament Facundo Conte continued the trend with 10 points. Russia held an 8-3 advantage in blocks and 7-4 in aces. Argentina committed 24 errors while Russia limited their miscues to 16 in the three sets. "We played well tonight, our team were good in the serve, block and spike," Russia's Valery Komorov said. "Service was very important in the match. We have to fight for fifth place." Argentina coach Javier Weber said: "We played our worst match in this World Championship tonight. It can happen sometimes, but I am sad about it. We have a young team, now we have to finish what we started at the beginning of this competition."

Pool Q in Florence

Cuba beat Bulgaria 3-2 (22-25, 25-23, 26-28, 30-28, 15-11)

World No. 8 Cuba served up a spectacular victory over 2006 bronze medallists Bulgaria, their 20th in 33 matches against their European opponents, in the Nelson Mandela Forum to advance to the semifinals. The youthful Cuban side showed incredible maturity to fight back from 1-0 and 2-1 down to clinch and outstanding victory, which gives Cuba the chance to record their best World Championship result since finishing third in 1998, much to the delight to the fans, who cheered every point in the tie break thriller. Cuban kid wonder Wilfredo Leon, at 17 the youngest player in the tournament, scored 22 points while captain Robertlandy Simon added another 20 in the victory. Vladimir Nikolov led the scoring for Bulgaria, scoring 28 points, including a devastating six service aces. Matey Kaziyski scored 20 with four blocks. Cuba won despite having having 41 errors and Bulgaria having a 16-9 block advantage. Cuba made up the difference with a 76-50 successful attack advantage. Bulgaria now have to be content to go to Modena to compete in the playoffs for positions 5-8. "I'm happy to be in the final four in Rome with Italy, Brazil and Serbia," Cuba coach Orlando Samuel said. "In the deciding moment we managed to conclude points, thanks to the supporters that helped us so much and I'm very proud of our team, but Bulgaria played very well as well. It was a difficult but incredible match." Bulgaria captain Vladimir Nikolov said: "I'm very upset tonight because we can't go to Rome. Congratulations to Cuba that played a good match and in crucial part of the match they could conclude better."

Match Schedule - Oct 8 & 9 (Semifinals)

Oct. 8 Pool T (Modena – Positions 5-8): Russia-Germany 17:00. USA-Germany 21:00
Oct. 8 Pool U (Florence – Positions 9-12): Argentina-Spain 17:00. France –Czech Republic 21:00.
Oct. 9 Pool S (Rome – Positions 1-4): Serbia-Cuba 17:00. Italy-Brazil 21:00

Highest Scorers By Day

Day 1 (1 st Rd): 28 points by Antonin Rouzier (FRA) in France's 3-2 win over the Czech Republic in Turin
Day 2 (1 st Rd): 27 points by Maxim Mikhaylov (RUS) in Russia's 3-1 win over Australia in Modena

Day 3 (1st Rd): 28 points by Fernando Hernandez (CUB) in Cuba's 3-2 win over Brazil in Verona
Day 4 (2nd Rd): 24 points by Gyrgy Grozer (GER) in Germany's 3-0 win over Puerto Rico in Catania
Day 5 (2nd Rd): 30 points by Iban Perez (ESP) in Spain's 3-2 win over Russia in Catania
Day 6 (2nd Rd): 23 points by Ahmed Abdelhay (EGY) in Egypt's win against Spain in Catania
Day 7 (3rd Rd): 25 points by Murilo (BRA) in Brazil's win over the Czech Republic in Rome
Day 8 (3rd Rd): 26 points by Ivan Miljkovic (SRB) in Serbia's win over Russia in Florence
Day 9 (3rd Rd): 28 points by Vladimir Nikolov (BUL) in Cuba's win over Bulgaria in Florence

Highest Set Score

34-32 (EGY v JPN in Pool A) (CUB v BRA in Pool B) Both matches played on September 27.

Tournament Top Scorers

127 Clayton Stanley (USA)
126 Iban Perez (ESP)
123 Maxim Mikhaylov (RUS)
122 Facundo Conte (ARG)
122 Vladimir Nikolov (BUL)

Birthdays

Jochen Schops (GER) turns 27 on Oct 8
David Konecny (CZE) turns 28 on Oct 10

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Coming soon

The FIVB Women's World Championship Japan 2010 (October 29 - November 14, 2010)

The FIVB Club World Championships (December 14-21, 2010) in Doha, Qatar

FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships (June 17-26) Rome, Italy