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Cuba to play Brazil in FIVB Men's World Championship Italy 2010 final

Rome, Italy, October 9, 2010 – Two-times defending champions and world No. 1 Brazil will play the new generation of Cuba in the first ever gold medal match between these two nations in the FIVB Men's World Championship Italy 2010 final in Rome on Sunday after both teams won their semifinals on Saturday. Cuba beat Serbia in a thrilling five-set match 3-2 (22-25, 25-17, 31-29, 22-25, 16-14) before Brazil beat Italy 3-1 (25-15, 25-22, 23-25, 25-17).

In other matches on Saturday, Russia beat USA 3-0 (25-19, 25-21, 25-19) to claim fifth place, Bulgaria proved too good for Germany 3-0 (26-24, 26-24, 25-21) for seventh place, Argentina overcame the Czech Republic 3-1 (25-22, 18-25, 25-21, 25-22) to finish ninth while France beat Spain 3-1 (25-17, 25-23, 16-25, 25-21) in the playoff for 11th.

Cuba will play Brazil for the FIVB Men's World Championship Italy 2010 gold medal in Rome on Sunday at 21:15 preceded by the bronze medal match between Serbia and Italy at 17:00.

Semifinals for 1st-4th place in Rome

Cuba beat Serbia 3-2 (22-25, 25-17, 31-29, 22-25, 16-14)

A phenomenal points haul of 30 points, record-equaling for the tournament, from super scorer Ivan Miljkovic couldn't stop Serbia from going down to Cuba in five sensational sets. Cuba, ranked 8th in the world and firm underdogs having lost to Serbia in the second round and also in the 2010 World League bronze medal match, booked a spot in their first FIVB Men's World Championship final since 1990 thanks to the youngest player in the tournament Wilfredo Leon, who top scored for Cuba with 23 points followed by Yoandy Leal with 21 and "Captain Fantastic" Robertlandy Simon who scored 17 times. The win broke a run by Cuba, who have now been involved in three of the top five highest scoring matches in the tournament, of eight defeats in the last 10 matches against Serbia and goes against the overall trend which had seen Serbia win 16 of the previous 23 encounters between the two nations. Neither Cuba, three-time medalists (one silver and two bronze), nor Serbia, 1998 silver medalists, have won a World Championship title and now Cuba will have their second chance after reaching the final in 1990 when they lost to Italy. The shot at the title completely reverses their 2006 performance when they finished 15th. "During this World Championship Cuba encountered very strong teams like Bulgaria, Spain, Serbia and Brazil," Cuba coach Orlando Samuel Blackwood said. "In the past we lost three times against Serbia and tonight after a difficult start, we managed to regain our rhythm and won the 2nd and 3rd set, losing the 4th and winning the match at the tie-break. I'm very happy because my team is young, and we can invest in our future." Cuba captain Robertlandy Simon said: "It was a great match. This is the first time we played a semifinal and won it. The match with Serbia was quite difficult, but I have to admit that we were lucky in winning the match. The Championship is like a war, we still miss the last battle. At the beginning we didn't think we would have reached the final."

Brazil beat Italy 3-1 (25-15, 25-22, 23-25, 25-17)

Brazil won the battle between the winners of the last five FIVB Men's World Championship titles, and against a sold out crowd of more than 12,000 fans, when the world No. 1 handed hosts and three-time champions from 1990-1998 Italy their first defeat of the tournament with a well-worked win in the second semifinal in the PallaLottmatica. Topscorers for Brazil were Vissotto with 24 points followed by Dante and Murilo with 16 and 10 respectively while Alessandro Fei led Italy's attack with 20 points while Luigi Mastrangelo was the only Italian to reach double figures with 12. The victory sets up Brazil for their third successive World Championship final on Sunday while Cuba will contest only their second World Championship final after losing to Italy in the 1990 final. Brazil have won the last two titles and a silver medal in 1982. The victory was Brazil 12th in a row against Italy dating back to the 2003 World League including the 2006 World Championship semifinal and the 2004 Olympic Games and World League finals. "Today we played an excellent

match, and I loved the support from the fans," Brazil captain Giba said. "We played tactically better than the Italian team but now we have to slow down and regain our concentration because Cuba is a strong group which is playing at an extremely high technical level. We knew Marra and Savani were the two weak points and Vermiglio and Cernic were the best receivers. Our two middle blockers are intelligent and knew exactly who to pinpoint. We made some mistakes too, but we changed our scheme which helped us win the match." Brazil coach Bernardo Rezende said: "We played very well even though we made some mistakes, but Italy was in great difficulty and so we took advantage of the situation. Since both teams were basically at the same level, whoever made less errors would have won the match. Bruno was injured during the match and some other players have physical problems so now I must concentrate at recuperating these key players since the final with Cuba will be a real battle."

Final for 5th-6th place in Modena

Russia beat USA 3-0 (25-19, 25-21, 25-19)

Russia claimed a straight-sets victory over USA in the match for the fifth position at the FIVB Men's World Championship in a sold out PalaCasaModena. The high wall at the net established by the big Russians was the key for the victory, the 28th in 41 matches for the world No. 2 against the world No. 3. The European side out-blocked the Americans 12-6. Maxim Mikhaylov led Russia with 20 points including three blocks while Taras Khtey and Yury Berezhko registered 13 and 11 respectively. Sean Rooney was the only American in double digits with 13 points while Clayton Stanley added nine.

Final for 7th-8th place in Modena

Bulgaria beat Germany 3-0 (26-24, 26-24, 25-21)

Vladimir Nikolov scored 25 points carrying Bulgaria to a straight sets victory over Germany to claim seventh place at the 2010 FIVB Men's World Championship. The amazing Nikolov compiled four aces and two blocks among his match-high total while Matey Kaziyski and Nikolay Nikolov contibuted nine and eight points respectively. Germany's Robert Kromm charted 19 points while captain Bjorn Andrae and Jochen Schops registered 11 tallies apiece. Germany had the edge in blocking (10-9) while Bulgaria topped the aces department 5-2.

Final for 9th-10th place in Florence

Argentina beat the Czech Republic 3-1 (25-22, 18-25, 25-21, 25-22)

World No. 9 Argentina beat the Czech Republic in the ninth-place match of the FIVB Men's World Championship by serving up a spectacular four set victory. The two teams exchanged the lead but Argentina made a good showing since the very start of the match to prove too good for their European opponents ranked 36th in the world. Three Argentina players reached 17 points apiece as captain Rodrigo Quirogo, Facundo Conte and Federico Pereyra supplied the majority of the attack while the Czech Republic's offence centered around Jan Stokr (18 points), Peter Platenik (17 points) and Jiri Popelka (14 points). The block was also Argentina's friend as they scored a 7-3 advantage at the net.

Final for 11th-12th place in Florence

France beat Spain 3-1 (25-17, 25-23, 16-25, 25-21)

France beat Spain for the eighth time in 11 matches to finish 11th, representing France's worst finish at an FIVB Men's World Championship since 1982 when Les Tricolours finished 16th. France was led in scoring by Guillaume Samica's 16 points while Stephane Antiga added 14 points. Spain's Iban Perez, the leading scorer in the tournament heading into the match, scored a match-high 21 points after being limited to just four points in the first two sets. Tenth place for Spain represents their second-best finish in three World Championships after finishing eighth in 1998 and 13th in 2006.

Match Schedule - Oct 10

17:00 Bronze medal match (Rome) Serbia v Italy

21:15 Gold medal match (Rome) Cuba v Brazil

Final Standings

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1)	7) Bulgaria
2)	8) Germany
3)	9) Argentina
4)	10) Czech Republic
5) Russia	11) France
6) USA	12) Spain

Highest Scorers By Day

Day 1 (1st Rd): 28 points by Antonin Rouzier (FRA) in France's 3-2 win over the Czech Republic in Turin
 Day 2 (1st 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
 Day 10 (Semifinals): 26 points by Iban Perez (ESP) in Argentina's win over Spain in Florence
 Day 11 (Semifinals/Finals): 30 points by Ivan Miljkovic (SRB) in Cuba's win over Serbia in Rome

Highest Set Score

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

Highest Scoring Matches

233 (BUL v CUB in 3rd Round) 2-3 (25-22, 23-25, 28-26, 28-30, 11-15) played on October 6 in Florence
 231 (FRA v BUL in 1st Round) 3-2 (25-22, 23-25, 25-17, 28-30, 19-17) played on September 26 in Turin
 230 (CUB v BRA in 1st Round) 3-2 (34-32, 18-25, 23-25, 25-21, 15-12) played on September 27 in Verona
 228 (JPN v EGY in 1st Round) 3-2 (32-34, 23-25, 25-19, 25-17, 15-13) played on September 27 in Milan
 226 (SRB v CUB in Semifinal (1-4) 3-2 (25-22, 17-25, 29-31, 25-22, 14-16) played on October 9 in Rome

Tournament Top Scorers

173 Iban Perez (ESP)
 168 Vladimir Nikolov (BUL)
 162 Maxim Mikhaylov (RUS)
 157 Facundo Conte (ARG)
 150 Clayton Stanley (USA)

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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