

Cubans Sanchez and de Armas shine on opening day of Club Volleyball World Cup

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Havana, December 6 (RHC) - Cubans Maikel "el Ruso" Sanchez and Alain de Armas were key players in their teams' victories on the opening day of the Men's Club Volleyball World Cup, held in Bengaluru, India.

At 37 years of age, "the Russian" of Cuban volleyball continues to stand out at the international level. This Wednesday he scored 20 points (17 in attack) and led Itambé Minas to a 3-0 victory over the local Defenders, in a Group A match.

After leaving Cuban volleyball and excelling in different leagues around the world, Sanchez was one of the players who returned to the Cuban national team in 2019 along with star players Robertlandy Simon and Raidel Hierrezuelo, but in recent tournaments he has not been called up to the island's team.

The other Cuban who shone in the opening of the Club World Cup was the young Alain de Armas (22), a mainstay in the victory of Suntory Sunbirs (Japan) against Halkbank Sport Kulubu (Turkey) in three sets. De Armas, the best opposite player in the last edition of the Asian Club Championship, led his team's offense with 15 points, followed by the experienced Russian Dimitry Murerskiy (14).

For Turkey's Halkbank, Canada's John Perrin (11), France's Earvin Ngapeth (10) and the Netherlands' Nimir Abdel Aziz (8) stood out.

Six clubs are competing in the World Cup: Sunbirs, HBK, Sada Cruzeiro and Itambé (Brazil), the current champion Perugia (Italy) and the Defenders (India), and four of them have players born in Cuba. In addition to Sanchez and Armas, Wilfredo Leon and Jesus Herrera (from reigning champion Perugia) and Miguel Angel Lopez (Sada) are also in the fray.

On Thursday the tournament continues with the duels between Sada of Cuban López and Brazilian Wallace against the Japanese Sunbirs of Cuban de Armas, and Perugia of León and Herrera against Itambé of Maikel Sánchez.

The qualifying round is completed with the clashes on Friday 8 between Sada-HBK and Defenders-Perugia, the semifinals on Saturday and the grand final on Sunday.

Perugia won last year in the Brazilian city of Betim thanks to Simone Gianneli (MVP and best passer of the tournament) and the Polish nationalized Cuban Wilfredo León (second best attacker).

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