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# Hosts Canada emerge as heavy favorite in Edmonton

EDMONTON, Canada, January 7, 2016 – The NORCECA Men’s Volleyball Olympic Qualification Tournament, a four-team competition, serves off on Friday at the Saville Community Sports Centre of Edmonton located in the north western region of Canada.

Teams of hosts Canada, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico will be battling under a round-robin format for one ticket available for the winner to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

Canada, currently ranked No. 10 in the world and playing at home, is considered as pre-tournament favorites but a stiff competition is expected from the sides of Cuba (15th), Puerto Rico (22th) and Mexico (24th). The United States, the major power in NORCECA region, are already qualified to Rio as winners of the FIVB World Cup.

The four teams competing in Edmonton were determined by the four top positions from the NORCECA Men’s Continental Tournament held in Monterrey, Mexico last October. Canada won their first ever title at the zonal biennial competition by defeating Cuba 3-1 (25-23, 19-25, 25-18, 25-17). Puerto Rico defeated Mexico in straight sets for the bronze medal.

The victory at the continental tournament was part of a successful year for the team coached by Glenn Hoag as the Canadian men also claimed the crown at the NORCECA Champions Cup, a four-team qualifier to the World Cup held in Detroit, USA last May, capped by a sensational five-set seesaw triumph over hosts United States 3-2 (25-22, 19-25, 21-25, 25-21, 17-15). Cuba defeated Mexico in straight sets for the third position.

The Canadians finished with a bronze medal at home during the volleyball tournament of the Pan American Games held in Toronto in July with a 3-1 (25-11, 25-12, 23-25, 25-18) over Puerto Rico. They were also the best positioned team of NORCECA at the annual Men’s Pan American Cup in Reno, USA in August with a fourth place behind Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela.

All the matches will be streamed at while the Saturday’s match between Canada and Puerto Rico will be live on national television on CBC.

The teams that finish in second and third places remain in contention for the World Olympic Qualification Tournaments this May.

The second placed team will compete at the eight-team World Olympic Qualification Tournament to be played in Japan between the periods of May 14 to June 4 where the hosts will be joined by the top three Asian teams according to the FIVB Men’s World Ranking, the second and third placed teams from the European Qualification Tournament and the second placed team from the South American



Qualification Tournament. The top Asian team and the top three ranked teams from this competition will qualify to the Olympics.

The third placed from NORCECA, the third team from South America and the second and third team from Africa will compete at the Men’s Intercontinental Olympic Qualification Tournament for the final spot in the twelve-team field of the Olympic Games.

The competition schedule is the following:

January 8th

17:00 - Canada v Mexico

19:00 - Cuba v Puerto Rico

January 9th

13:30 - Canada v Puerto Rico

16:00 - Cuba v Mexico

January 10th

17:00 - Puerto Rico v Mexico

19:00 - Canada v Cuba