

AMERICAS CUP

AUGUST 24-29th, RICHMOND, CANADA

2009



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For Immediate Release

August 28, 2009

Rivals Canada and USA Will Battle for Gold Saturday to Decide Americas Cup Wheelchair Basketball Qualifier at the Richmond Oval.

Wheelchair Basketball Canada and BC Wheelchair Basketball host the Americas Cup qualifier for the 2010 World Wheelchair Basketball Championships

For Immediate Release

Vancouver, B.C. – With a spot at next year’s World Championships on the line Team Canada prevailed over an aggressive and very speedy Brazilian team in their Americas Cup semi-final match Friday. They now advance to Saturday’s gold medal game against arch-rival Team USA who defeated Mexico 86-39 in the other semi-final.

While the top three teams at the Americas Cup earn a spot at next year’s World Championships in Birmingham, England, a decades worth of adversary between these two international powerhouses all but guarantees a thrilling and suspenseful conclusion to the weeklong tournament at the Richmond Olympic Oval.

There is plenty at stake for the defending World Champions who have been dazzling their home crowd all week with the speed and skill that helped earn them a back-to-back Paralympic gold medals in 2000 and 2004.

Canada and the USA have met in the championship game of every Americas Zone qualification tournament in the last decade. Canada has the edge going into this year’s final having won 3 out of the last 5 tournaments. Most recently, Canada defeated their rivals in a double-overtime thriller in the semi-finals of the 2008 Beijing Paralympics as well as the Championship game of the 2006 World Championships.

Adam Lancia (Toronto, ON) and Joey Johnson (Winnipeg, MB) set the tone early in Canada’s semi-final match. Johnson won the opening tipoff and thirteen seconds later Richard Peter (Vancouver, BC) deposited a pass to open the scoring. Not to be intimidated, the Brazilians responded almost immediately with a three-pointer by Marcos De Silva. The first quarter would unfold with both teams going shot for shot amidst some extremely tight checking.

David Eng (Montreal, QC) knocked down a three-pointer of his with to beat the buzzer and pad the Canadian lead at 19-15 to conclude the first period.

The Canadians would step up their defence in the second quarter, but found their offense cool for a long stretch. Queue Dave Durepos (Fredericton, NB), one of Canada's bright lights in the tournament thus far. He was inserted into the game to stir things up and helped Canada increase their lead to 6 points at the midway point.

In the second half Brazil capitalized on their speed and intensity to stay within striking distance. They kept Canada in check by applying pressure the full length of the court, but Lancia was not to be denied as he continued to drive the hoop again and again. He finished a game high 18 points and 11 rebounds.

"Brazil has always been a super intense team," he said.

"These guys just keep coming at you and they're loud and they're in your face. It's really kind of fun to play against. They have made leaps and bounds, especially in the mental aspect of the game. They really pushed us today. We could play with them in the past and we knew that they were just going to break apart mentally. But they stuck with us hard right to the end of the buzzer."

Canada was able to avoid foul trouble as the game wound down and hung on for the crucial win.

"We were thinking we would win over Canada and would be playing the US. But now, we are thinking we will be playing Mexico tomorrow so we need to recover ourselves and go with full power again," said Brazilian head coach Maria de Fatima.

"We tried to put on the pressure and win with speed. Unfortunately we lost the pace in the third quarter and couldn't keep it up and we ended up losing some points."

Score at the end of each quarter:

1st quarter: 19-15 (Canada)

2nd quarter: 12-10 (Canada)

3rd quarter: 12-14 (Canada)

4th quarter: 23-19 (Canada)

Final Score: 66-58 (Canada)

Team Canada will play the USA to decide the Americas Cup champion in the gold medal game Saturday August 29th, at 3:00 p.m. (PST).

The bronze medal game at 1:00 p.m. (PST) will decide the third and final team to qualify for the 2010 qualifying teams will be decided in the gold and bronze medal games starting at 1:00 p.m. (PST) on August 29th.

Play will be webcast live at www.sportscanada.tv

For more information visit www.wheelchairbasketball.ca

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