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Volleyball: Tom, Thomas Lead U.S. Women Over Cuba

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GIOIA DEL COLLE, Italy -- Courtesy of USA Volleyball

Former Stanford star Logan Tom and Grass Valley native Elisha Thomas each scored 10 points Monday night as the U.S. women's national volleyball team swept Cuba to begin the 2003 FIVB World Grand Prix on a winning note at the Palazzo dello Sport.

Team captain Danielle Scott, the Most Valuable Player of this tournament in 2001 when the United States won the gold medal, had seven kills and a match-high four blocks in the 25-22, 25-19, 25-14 victory in Pool A.

Keba Phipps, Tom and Thomas added 10 points apiece as the U.S. team won its sixth match in a row to improve to 10-6 on the season.

Phipps, playing in her first match of the year, added a team-high nine digs. Thomas, starting in place of an injured Heather Bown, had five kills, three blocks and two service aces. Tom, the team's top scorer in 11 of 16 matches on the year, had eight kills, one block, one ace and seven digs.

"Tonight was a really physical game, like Cuba always is," said opposite Nancy Metcalf, who scored seven points on five kills and two blocks. "Our goal was to take care of our side and stay focused. We knew if we took care of the ball and stayed under control, we could beat Cuba. A 3-0 win feels good and now we are looking forward to the match with Japan tomorrow."

Tayyiba Haneef, playing in her first match since spraining her ankle on June 12, scored five points on five kills off the bench. Libero Stacy Sykora registered eight digs.

"Tonight gave us confidence that we will be able to build on throughout the tournament," said setter Lindsey Berg (Honolulu, Hawaii), who scored two points. "We came out a little dead and out of rhythm, but we were patient and by the end of the first game, we were taking care of business on our side. We did a lot of good things tonight and we hope to get stronger and stronger each match."

As a team, the United States out-blocked Cuba, 11-2, and posted a hitting percentage of .529 (42-5-70). Cuba hit .222. Next up for the Americans in Pool A is a match against Japan on Tuesday.

Yumilka Ruiz and Kenia Carcase scored eight points apiece to lead Cuba, which has lost its last four matches against the United States.

In other Pool A action, the Netherlands swept Japan and Italy defeated Germany, 3-1. In Pool B, Brazil and China posted sweeps of Thailand and Canada, respectively, while Korea upset defending Grand Prix champion Russia, 3-1.

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Daily Olympics Story Archive

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