

2004 FIVB World Grand Prix

Brazil claim fourth World Grand Prix title in stunning final

Reggio Calabria, Italy, August 1, 2004 – World number three Brazil claimed their fourth World Grand Prix title with an exhilarating 3-1 (25-19, 25-19, 24-26, 25-19) win over world champions Italy in the final of the 2004 edition in Reggio Calabria, Italy

Passion, determination and a superb united performance saw the Brazilians, who had previously won the World Grand Prix in 1994, 1996 and 1998, put on an incredible display which will have them heading to the Olympics as one of the favourites for gold.

Wonderful contributions from Marianne Steinbrecher (23 points) and Virna Dias and Erika Coimbra (18 points respectively) paved the way for Brazil, who were coming off a marathon five-set semifinal win over USA on Saturday, to make up for their shock seventh place finish in 2003.

More than 9,000 fans came to the Palapentimele to see Italy, whose previous best finish in the World Grand Prix was fourth in 1999, try and pull off an upset win but although the Squadra Azzurra, who have only beaten Brazil six times in 37 meetings, claimed one set, they were always facing an uphill battle against a polished Brazilian outfit.

“We started very well, controlling their strong attackers like Simona Rinieri and Nadia Centoni,” Brazilian captain Fernanda Venturini said. “We are ecstatic with this victory, because controlling their good players helped us to work well. Now our principal aim is Athens 2004.”

“I’m very happy with our victory,” Brazilian coach Mr. Jose Guimaraes said. “I like my team especially for their concentration but most of all for their determination. We were growing all the time during this tournament. We contested well in a Grand Prix, which was very even, both in the Preliminary Round and in the Final Round.”

Earlier, the 2003 World Grand Prix bronze medallists USA repeated that result with a straight sets 25-20, 25-22, 25-16 win over a young Cuban side. It was an impressive performance from the two-time champions after their five-set semifinal defeat at the hands of Brazil, while Cuba will be equally satisfied with fourth place after finishing 11th in 2003.

Final top-six standings

- 1) Brazil
- 2) Italy
- 3) USA
- 4) Cuba
- 5) China
- 6) Germany

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