

Aurora's Nusbaum hits the beach at Peru's Pan Am games



By Jake Courtepatte

Taking part in his first-ever Pan Am Games opening ceremonies on July 26 in Lima, Peru, Aaron Nusbaum was already three days into competition.

The Dr. G.W. Williams graduate, as well as his beach volleyball partner Mike Plantinga of British Columbia, had little time to embrace the moment as they prepared for their quarterfinal matchup with team Venezuela.

The pair had squeaked through the Games' opening matchup with Nicaragua on day one of the competition in two games, before cruising through the United States to meet with Venezuela. It took Canada three games, where they were featured on centre court, to punch their ticket to the semifinal round.

They experienced their first loss against Chile in the semis, before narrowly falling to the Argentinians by scores of 21-17, and 21-18 to fall just shy of reaching the podium.

Despite the loss, Nusbaum took it all in stride in his inaugural Pan Am Games.

‘It was incredible to be in the atmosphere of a multi-sport event,’ said Nusbaum. ‘Everything from the athlete’s village, the venue, the fans and the overall energy is something that cannot be explained.’

Nusbaum is no stranger to the big stage: he competed in the World Championships in Vienna in 2017, and has found success

on the Continental Tour all around the world.

Yet, he admits he ?didn't know what to expect? coming into Pan Am.

?We just knew it would somehow feel different. The biggest difference was the feeling of playing on centre court, especially as you go deeper and deeper into playoffs. Every play somehow becomes harder to execute as the hype grows.

?Mike and I played some of our best volleyball in terms of our overall consistency and execution. It's been very disappointing knowing we had two chances at a medal and unfortunately couldn't bring one home.?

As any good athlete will tell you, however, it's important to look to the future, not the past: Nusbaum now has his sights set on qualification for the 2020 Olympic Games, to be held in Tokyo.

Qualification runs through competing in Continental Cup events.

?Stay tuned!?