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2009 College Table Tennis National Championships

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WEBSITE: <http://www.nctta.com/champs/2009/index.html>

****NEWS RELEASE****

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ROCHESTER, Minnesota- Puerto Rico Avenges 2008 Loss, Defeating Princeton in Semi-Final Rematch

What a difference a year makes. Last year at this time the Princeton table tennis team had just finished defeating the University of Puerto Rico in the Semi-Final, shattering their hopes of playing for the 2008 National title. The memory of this is still quite vivid for the Puerto Ricans providing extra motivation for the rematch in 2009. Princeton defeated Wisconsin in a tight 3-2 match to advance to the Semi-Final, while Puerto Rico had their hands full as well, narrowly advancing over upstart Lindenwood 3-2. The 2009 rosters for each team looked a little different from 2008. A retooled Puerto Rico team returned Khaleel Asgarali and Jose Pagan from 2008, and added Allen Fonollosa and Santiago Coste. Princeton returned Eric Finklestein and Alden Fan, but lost Pan Lin to graduation and was without star Adam Hugh, out with an injury.

Asgarali faced Finklestein in the first match of the contest. It proved competitive from start to finish as both players pushed each other all over the court. Asgarali was down in the 5th game, but cheered on by enthusiastic Puerto Rican teammates and was able to stay tough, prevailing 11-9 in the final game. Puerto Rico had captured the momentum and Fonollosa and Coste cruised to relatively easy victories over George Xing and Alden Fan respectively. After the match, Jose Pagan, Puerto Rico Team captain would say through a translator, "Asgarali's win against Finklestein was very important because it set the course for the [team] match. If he had lost Princeton would have had the emotional and mental advantage over us."

Puerto Rico advanced to their first ever Team Final, facing Texas Wesleyan, while Princeton would be forced to play for third against Columbia.