

Water Polo Men: Day 1: ESP 18 NZL 3

FINA Communication Department

Spain opened its campaign with an 18-3 Group A victory over New Zealand, starting slowly, building to a crescendo in the third quarter, before easing off the accelerator. The inexperienced Kiwis will learn to fly at these championships and with an average age of about four years younger than the Spanish and a vast chasm in the number of internationals played, they performed well.

Spain kept New Zealand scoreless in the first quarter and it must be said that Spain looked rusty with some wayward shots peppering the sky. Guillermo Molina on penalty, Xavier Valles on extra and Ricard Alarcon from the top, gave the huge Spanish crowd something to cheer about.

The march continued through Albert Espanol and captain Felipe Perrone for 5-0 five minutes into the second quarter. New Zealand drew a penalty and Eamon Lui-Fakaotimanaua converted, pumped the air and turned to the large Kiwi contingent for moral support. Pere Estrany closed the half for Spain with a score on extra-man attack.

Spain went on a scoring safari in the third period with seven straight goals before Lui-Fakaotimanaua accepted a long pass up front to catch, turn and score for 13-2 at 0:05.

Spain went to 15-2 before Matthew Lewis finished off a steal for his team's third goal. Spain scored three goals in three and a half minutes and was denied any more with two minutes left. Fittingly, Perrone scored the last goal for Spain, his fifth of the match from just five attempts.

New Zealand's effort tonight sits well alongside the two previous clashes at world championships where Spain won 21-2 in 1982 and 26-2 in 1994.

Match 2: 21:30, Group A, SPAIN 18 NEW ZEALAND 3

Quarters: 3-0, 3-1, 7-1, 5-1

Referees: Alan Balfanbayev (KAZ), Hatem Gaber (EGY)

Extra Man: ESP: 3/5. NZL: 0/2.

Pens: ESP: 2/2. NZL: 1/1.

Teams:

SPAIN:

Inake Aguilar, Alberto Munarrez, Ruben Do Lera (1), Ricard Alarcon (2), Guillermo Molina (1), Marc Minguell (1), Balazs Sziranyi (1), Albert Espanol (3), Xavier Valles (2), Felipe Perrone (5), Pere Estrany (1), Xavier Garcia (1), Daniel Lopez. Head Coach: Rafael Aguilar.

NEW

ZEALAND: Thomas Kingsmill, Matthew Lewis (1), Stefan Curry, Finn Lowery, Jonathan Ross, Andrew Sieprath, Daniel Jackson, Matthew Small, Eamon Lui-Fakaotimanaua (2), Matthew Bryant, Lachlan Tijssen, Adam Pye, Dylan

Smith. Head Coach: Jozsef Sike.

FLASH QUOTES:

Xavier García (ESP):

“We started in a good way but it turned out to be a complicated game. We were nervous, because it was the beginning of the championship. Playing at home is great because you feel the support of your fans. ”

Marc Minguell (ESP):

“It was the perfect start of the championship. Now we should focus on our next match. Playing at home is always special.”

Rafael Aguilar (ESP Head Coach):

“For us the competition starts now. The competition is going to be really balanced. There are a lot of good teams and the most difficult games are ahead of us.”

Daniel Jackson (NZL):

“The game was really hard, we know that we were playing against the home team with so much noise. We will try to improve for the next match.”

Eamon Lui-Fakaotimanaua (NZL):

“We knew that it would be a tough game. We tried not to give up, but it has been hard. We were nervous for playing here against Spain, but not scared of them. It’s always difficult to start playing against the home team.”
