

Water Polo Women: Day 2: RUS 7 ESP 6

FINA Communication Department

Russia stretched its recent record against Spain to seven matches at the major competitions and European Championships with a 7-6 Group A victory. It was Russia's second win and the first defeat for Olympic silver medallist Spain, making Thursday's final round match-ups rather tantalising. Spain won the final period 3-2 with two of those goals coming in the final minute, a touch too late. The huge crowd witnessed a classy match that promised many goals after

Russia's opening score at 7:10 through captain Evgeniya Ivanova, but the defence of both teams was exceptional as no more goals came in the period.

With nearly five minutes gone in the second quarter, Spain responded through Laura Lopez from well outside, her shot deflecting off a flailing arm into goal. Lopez followed it up with another 50 seconds later when the possession time was running out and players swimming up the pool. Her missile found the target and gave the Spanish crowd plenty to cheer about.

Russia took a timeout late in the half and the shot rebounded off the cross for Ekaterina Prokofyeva to collect, turn and lob for 2-2 at 0:01. She was at it again early in the third period to take Russia to the front, shooting from downtown Barcelona. If that was from the shopping centre, then Alexandra Antonova must have shot hers from the faraway beach half a minute later for 4-2. With the dust not settled on that goal, Antonova scored a second on extra-man attack from deep right.

Spanish head coach Miki Oca called a timeout to settle his team, which it did. Soon after Andrea Blas turned for a goal at centre forward and narrowed the margin to two.

Prokofyeva struck for a third time on counter and later Lopez netted her third for 6-4 with a deflected shot into the top. At 1:15, Prokofyeva became the first person to 10 goals when she lobbed from the left.

Blas repeated her earlier shot at centre forward with a minute left. Roser Tarrago added to Spain's bag with a long slider, meaning Russia had to protect the ball for the last 17 seconds for the victory.

Both goalkeepers deserve credit for their contribution with Anna Karnaukh (RUS) stopping 8 from 14 and Laura Ester (ESP) 10 from 17.

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Match 16: 21:30, Group A, SPAIN 6 RUSSIA 7

Quarters: 0-1, 2-1, 1-3, 3-2

Referees: Amber Drury (USA), Daniel Flahive (AUS).

Extra Man: ESP: 1/1. RUS: 0/2

Pens: Nil

Teams:

SPAIN: Laura Ester, Marta Bach, Anna Espar, Roser Tarrago (1), Matilda Ortiz, Jennifer Pareja, Lorena Miranda, Pilar Pena, Andrea Blas (2), Ona Meseguer, Maica Garcia, Laura Lopez (3), Patricia Herrera. Head Coach: Miguel Oca.

RUSSIA: Anna Ustyukhina, Diana Antonova, Ekaterina Prokofyeva (4), Elvina Karimova, Alexandra Antonova (2), Olga Belova, Ekaterina Tankeeva, Anna Grineva, Anna Timofeeva, Olga Beliaeva, Evgeniya Ivanova (1), Ekaterina Zelentsova, Anna Karnaukh. Head Coach: Mikhail Nakoryakov.

FLASH QUOTES:

Olga Beliaeva (RUS):

“The game was very balanced with opportunities for both teams, but we were a bit luckier. We base our game on our defence, playing defensive all the time. We know that women’s water polo is quite unpredictable but we hope to win the next game against the Netherlands to be able to fight for the medals.”

Mikhail Nakoryakov (RUS Head Coach):

“It was a very difficult game for us, and we hope to be playing the final in the end.”

Jennifer Pareja (ESP):

“The last games against the Russians have been very difficult for us. They know us very well, how we play with the centre, and they have a very close defence. We need to correct our mistakes and carry on.”

Ona Meseguer (ESP):

“It was a hard game, we were very unlucky and we made defensive mistakes. Russia is the only team that we haven’t been able to beat lately. But I trust in our team and we’ll try to find us again in the next game.”
