

## Water Polo Women: Day 4: NED 11 CHN 10

FINA Communication Department

The return of 2008 Olympic champion Netherlands to the world stage took one step closer with a heart-stopping 11-10 victory over World League champion China. The victory came in the quarterfinal qualification round and means that China, crowned World League champion just a month before in Beijing, has failed to make it through to the top eight and can go home.

At the start of the championship it was known that there were 10 teams capable of winning gold but that only one would. China is the first of the major nations to fall and will now have to find out its placing according to goal differences.

Netherlands was the better-prepared team for the match. It had the aggression in each quarter and backed itself on attack, continuing to shoot despite hitting the wood or slamming the ball into the dependable hands of Chinese goalkeeper Jun Yang.

China, so quick and determined on attack and not lacking in speed passing, only showed glimpses of that today. There was hesitation on the big shot and the passing started to disintegrate, no more so than in the final stages.

Netherlands opened the scoring but China led 2-1 after two Huanhuan Ma — Shanghai World Championships MVP — penalty goals. When Nomi Stomphorst scored at the start of the second quarter, China was never to see the lead again.

Netherlands went 6-4 ahead at halftime and 8-6 ahead before China narrowed the margin to 8-7 by the final break.

Zhang Cong, who scored before the break, levelled the match at 8-8 after the restart with a long shot from the top.

Then history came to play when Lieke Klaassen, already one of the top scorers in the championship, broke her match drought with a sparkling triple, the first of which became Netherlands' 700th goal at this event. She now has 16 goals.

By taking the Dutch to an 11-8 lead, the huge Dutch contingent in the grandstands was ecstatic. The Chinese players on the bench had their heads in their hands.

At 1:50, Ma struck her third and at 1:11 she converted a timeout ploy for 11-10. The match was now red hot.

Netherlands

went to a timeout and missed the shot. China blasted down the pool and Ma lacked support. When the ball finally arrived back at her for the magic solution, it was poorly received and she was called for a turnover just as the buzzer sounded.

China was down and out. Netherlands was back in the game.

### **Match 27: 12:10, Quarterfinal Qualification, CHINA 10 NETHERLANDS 11**

Quarters: 2-2, 2-4, 3-2, 3-3

Referees: Axel Bender (GER), Danny Flahive (AUS).

Extra Man: CHN: 2/6. NED: 1/5.

Pens: CHN: 2/2.

#### **Teams:**

CHINA: Jun Yang, Fei Teng (1), Ping Liu (1), Yujun Sun (1), Jin He, Yating Sun, Donglun Song (1), Lu Xu, Xiaohan Mei, Huanhuan Ma (4), Cong Zhang (2), Qun Xia, Ying Wang. Head Coach: Alexander Kleymenov.

NETHERLANDS: Ilse van der Meijden, Yasemin Smit (3), Marloes Nijhuis, Biurakn Hakhverdian, Sabrina van der Sloot, Nomi Stomphorst (1), Iefke van Belkum (2), Vivian Sevenich (2), Carolina Slagter, Dagmar Genee, Lieke Klaassen (3), Leonie van der Molen, Anne Heinis. Head Coach: Mauro Maugeri.

#### **FLASH QUOTES:**

##### **Leonie van der Molen (NED):**

“We are very happy because China is a strong team. In the overall game we have been superior to China. Now it’s time to relax and to focus on the next game, because we did a good job so far.”

##### **Dagmar Genee (NED):**

“The Chinese team could have tied in the last possession. We knew it was going to be hard, but we were confident. We are a good group and we work for each other.”

##### **Carolina Slagter (NED):**

“Despite the tight game, I felt we were better than China. It was meant for us to win this match.”

##### **Jun Yang (CHN):**

“Today we felt a lot of pressure because many fans came to support us. Technically we did some mistakes in the second half. We have to improve our defence.”

##### **Alexander Kleymenov (Head Coach):**

“I am very angry with the way we lost today. We didn’t play the last action well. The team did not apply the tactics I decided on the last possession. Moreover, I’m not happy with my player number 10 (Huanhuan Ma) and I have many things to discuss with her. We don’t have sufficient number of good players because we lost many important ones. Our preparation was not sufficient either and we were not prepared to play in this heat. The World League was different because we played at home. Anyway, now I feel frustrated but I need more time to analyse everything. Losing against Netherlands is not such a shame because it’s a very good team.”

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