

Water Polo Men, Day 4: GRE 13 RSA 5

FINA Communication Department

Greece became the first quarter-finalist after beating South Africa 13-5 in an enthralling match where extra-man was king. The official statistics may show Greece scoring five from seven but in actual fact they plundered eight from 11. It's just the way the official timing is done. It's like when a team scores at 21 seconds — one second over the exclusion period. Coaches count that as an extra-man goal. It's subjective, but it's the focus of water polo. In Greece's case it scored five within the 20 seconds, one at 21 seconds, one at 25 and one at 26. Official statistics claim shots as being on target within the 20-second period so this does not show the true figure.

South Africa has none from two, when in fact it was none from four. This match had South Africa playing at its best and Greece struggling to contain the men in green caps. It was 3-2 at the quarter and 4-4 six minutes into the second quarter.

Greece already had an extra-man goal, albeit at 26 seconds. Then, in the last half-minute of the half, Alexandros Gounas produced the first (21 seconds) of three consecutive goals from the same deep left position. His second came on the halftime buzzer. He repeated the dose on 26 seconds at the top of the third. Centre forward Christodoulos Kolomvos netted twice on extra followed by Ioannis Fountoulis to lead at the final break 10-4.

Big Ryan Bell departed the match in that quarter, losing some momentum for the South Africans who were struggling with body position, causing the multitude of exclusions.

Christos Afroudakis scored the official fifth extra-man goal early in the fourth period and when Emmanouill Mylonakis scored on counter he not only stopped a run of seven shots on "extra" but increased Greece's unanswered run to eight and 12-4.

Etienne Le Roux stopped the run with a six-metre shot at 4:03 for the second-last goal. Fountoulis scored off a cross pass for his 11th of the championship, closing the match at 13-5.

It was the third time the pair has met at World Championships with Greece also winning in 1994 and 1998.

Match 25: 09:30, Quarterfinal Qualification, GREECE 13 SOUTH AFRICA 5

Quarters: 3-2, 3-2, 4-0, 3-1

Referees: Petar Abramovic (MNE), Joao Cardenuto (BRA)

Extra Man: GRE: 5/7. RSA: 0/2.

Pens: Nil

Teams:

GREECE: Konstantinos Tsalkanis, Emmanouill Mylonakis (1), Konstantinos Gouvis, Konstantinos Genidounios, Ioannis Fountoulis (2), Kyriakos Pontikeas, Christos Afroudakis (2), Evangelos Delakas, Konstantinos Mourikis (1), Christodoulos Kolomvos (2), Alexandros Gounas (3), Angelos Vlachopoulos (2), Konstantinos Galanidis. Head Coach: Athanasios Kechagias.

SOUTH AFRICA: Dwayne Flatscher, Etienne Le Roux (1), Devon Card (1), Ignardus Badenhorst (1), Nicholas Rodda, Jason Kyte, Richard Downes (1), Ryan Bell, Dean Whyte, Pierre Le Roux, Nicholas Molyneux (1), Adam Kajee, Donn Stewart. Head Coach: Brad Rowe.

FLASH QUOTES:

Alexandros Gounas (GRE):

“All that matters is that we are now into the quarterfinals. I may have scored the most goals but my team helped me to score, water polo is a team sport.”

Konstantinos Tsalkanis (GRE):

“We were still sleeping. We started to play well in the third quarter. We are not happy with our performance. Maybe it was the time, the weather, our opponent... I don't know. South Africa is at a different level from us.”

Angelos Vlachopoulos (GRE):

“The reason why they were so close at halftime was that we weren't concentrating, probably because of the early hour and the fact that we didn't study properly our opponents. From now on we basically have to improve our defence.”

Richard Downes (RSA):

“We can't be sad because we are an amateur team, however, we could play better. In this match, we started with good momentum, but we committed three big mistakes — enough to make us lose this game.”

Adam Kajee (RSA):

“We were very close in the first part, but then they started to score more goals and we lost the match. Greece is one of the best teams in the world while we are just an amateur team. For example, I work in an office. Because of this we are happy overall with our performance in this competition.”
