

Iran, Uruguay, Malta win with ease, Camilleri hits 10, Saudis struggle but reach the semis too

Game 14, 15.30 – Quarter-final: Uruguay v Austria 9-3
Results & Teams

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

Referees: Michiel Zwart (NED), Peter Balzan (MLT)

URUGUAY

Alfonso Rodriguez, Martin Fernandez, Ramiro Garcia 3, Inti Sanguinet, Pablo Brugnini 3, Diego Dominguez, Santiago San Martin 2, Facundo Canepa, Nicolas Paseyro, Daniel Queipo, Nicolas Falco 1, Gaston del Campo, Joaquin Perez

Head coach: Jorge Remersaro

AUSTRIA

Salkan Samardzic, Onur Celebic 1, Mario Todorovic, Tobias Lang 1, Toni Vidovic, Eldin Ribic, Ian Sommer, Albert Schmidt, Johannes Gratzl 1, Nikolaus Polak, Florian Lukas, Filip Popic

Head coach: Barnabas Steinmetz

Extramen

Uruguay: 2 for 3

Austria: 0 for 5

Penalties

Uruguay: 0 for 1

Austria: 0 for 1

Report

A game decided by the better physical condition – it was clear that the Uruguayan players had more left in the tank on Day 4 of the tourney. It was visible in front mainly: while Uruguay scored some great goals from counters, the Austrians couldn't make their shots, the balls arrived around the goalie's hands in the dying seconds of the possessions, though Alfonso Rodriguez came up with a couple of big saves, too. One of them put their rivals on the slide as he stopped a penalty at 1-1 and later denied a man-down in the opening quarter.

In the second a pair of wonderful goals came from the 'Urus', Brugnini's great push from the centre, then a chess-mate like finish from a counter gave the Latin Americans a calming 4-1 lead.

An exceptionally fine shot from the distance by Celebic made its way to the net but another crucial miss, this time from a man-up, and the ensuing counter-attack goal by Brugnini set back the three-goal cushion by half-time.

The third saw a single goal, Falco's shot from the distance slipped in under the goalkeeper's hand (6-2) and since the Austrians couldn't create any danger no further excitements were scheduled for the last period.

Garcia's brilliant move – after his penalty was saved, he collected the rebound and flicked in from the surface – was the highlight of the final eight minutes which also highlighted the difference between the two sides as the gap grew further on.

Game 15, 16.50 – Quarter-final: Iran v Singapore 10-4
Results & Teams

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

Referees: Felipe Montagne (URU), Hassan Aljabri (KSA)

IRAN

Omid Loftpur Kiavar, P. Asadi Aghajari, A. Rahbarjedi 1, H. Malak Khanbanan 1, Amirhossein Keihani, Ali Pirozkah 1, Amir Dehdari 1, Mehdi Yazdankhah 2, Soheil Rostamian, Mohammadjavad Abbasi, Arshia Almasi 4, Hosein Khaledytabar, Shayan Ghasemidaryan

Head coach: Aleksandar Ciric

SINGAPORE

Jit An Darren Lee, Cheng-Kang Lee, Jia-Ooi Yee, Jing Lun Chow, Wei Loong Bryan Ong, Samuel Moses Yu, Kunyang Chiam 2, Wan Loong Ang, Junjie Yu, Zhen Wei Teo 2, En Rui Glen Lim, Kai Yu-Jun Olafson, Kai Yang Lee

Head coach: Thin Cheong Lee

Extramen

Iran: 5 for 10

Singapore: 1 for 7

Penalties

Iran: 1 for 1

Singapore: 1 for 1

Report

Singapore could keep up with the Iranians for one and a half periods then the Persians blew them away. Iran took a great start, converted two 6 on 5s in quick succession, in 45 seconds, though Teo's great shot from the distance was a fine response. It was an even game in the rest of the opening quarter and it remained the same for a while in the second, forcing Serbia's legendary player, Aleksandr Ciric, now Iran's head coach to yell at his players in an unmistakable manner... But that helped them to overcome the mental block, they raised the level of their game and it became quickly visible on the scoreboard. By half-time they went 4-1 up with two fine goals and soon in the third they staged a decisive surge. Almasi netted two (he finished the afternoon with 4 goals), Dehdari's late goal from a man-up was a kind of seal on Iran's win as it stood 8-2 before the last period. The final eight minutes saw two more hits apiece but both sides seemed to try to reserve some energy for the last two days.

Game 16, 18.10 – Quarter-final: Tunisia v Saudi Arabia 9-10
Results & Teams

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

Referees: Andrey Korolev (AUT), Nestor Guerra (PER)

TUNISIA

Aymen Kedidi, Mehdi Ferjani, Nadim Fekih, Taha Ben Slimane, Karim Ghomrasni 2, Nadhem Essaied 1, N. Ben Hajkhelifa, Salim Bouallegue, Chihab Ben Hajkhelifa 2, Bechir Chouikha 4, Adem Fellah, Mohamed Khalfet, Amanallah Sghaier.

Head coach: Moez Yangui

SAUDI ARABIA

Hussein Jazany, Yaser Alzahrani 1, Mohammed Gamal 1, Malik Mokhtar, Naif Almuntashiri, Ayman Alaryani 2, Hassan Kalfoot, Khaled Alharbi 1, Hattan Olayan 1, Bader Aldaughter 2, Hamed Alnefaiei 1, Mohammed Alhelal 1, Omar Shavahili.

Head coach: Pino Dragjevic

Extramen

Tunisia: 7 for 15

Saudi Arabia: 5 for 11

Penalties

None

Report

Just as the top hit of Queen, the Bohemian Rhapsody, played during the match, the game was somewhat rhapsodic despite a group-winner met with the tournament's only winless side. It started as it was expected, the favourite Saudis jumped to a 0-3 lead but a fine lob from Chouikha, then a man-up goal from Ghomrasni brought the Tunisians close – and from time to time they repeated that scenario.

In fact, they could have imposed an even bigger threat to the Saudis but they missed a couple of crucial 6 on 5s. One happened at 4-6, and soon their rivals netted their man-up so it stood 4-7 instead of 5-6.

When the Saudis went 4-8 up they seemed to sit comfortably in the driving seat but perhaps they felt too much comfort – with two finely tuned extramens the Tunisians got closer once more at 6-8. Alharbi's magnificent left-handed blast hit the top corner to earn some calmer moments for the Saudis but a fine save from the Tunisian goalie in a man-down gave some hope for the underdogs.

And they converted a 6 on 5 for 7-9 and had another man-up, then a 4 on 3 counter to halve the gap but missed both and Gamal's fine action goal seemed to place the Saudis into safety (7-10).

However, the Tunisians had other ideas, pulled one back immediately for 8-10 with 4:09 remaining and showed some great defending to keep their hopes alive. And 55 seconds from time Chouikha managed to score after a great steal for 9-10 (it was his 4th goal in the game), then another steal gave them enough time to try to save the match to the shootout. What's more they earned a 6 on 5, Jazany had a big save, still, after the corner-throw another exclusion came... But the last shot hit a blocking hand, also blocking the possibility to have the first big upset of the event.

Game 13, 19.30 – Quarter-final: Malta v Peru 21-6
Results & Teams

Quarters: 5-1, 5-2, 5-1, 6-2

Referees: Ulrich Spiegel (GER), Jeremy Cheng (SGP)

MALTA

Nicolas Grixti, Jerome Gabarretta 2, Edward Aquilina, Jacob Sciberras 1, Andreas Galea 1, Miguel Zammit, Steve Camilleri 10, Jordan Camilleri 1, Nicky Paris, Aurelien Cousin 1, Zachary Mizzi 2, Dino Zammit 3, Jake Tanti.

Head coach: Karl Izzo

PERU

Sebastian Bravo, Nick Pizarro, Sebastian Pastor 2, German Rodriguez, Eduardo Grandez, Diego Guevara, Nicolas Villar 2, Rodrigo Pachero, Sebastian Morales, Diego Villar 2, Rodrigo Rojas, Sebastian Dancourt, Adriano Zunino.

Head coach: Rafael Valdes

Extramens

Malta: 6 for 8

Peru: 1 for 9

Penalties

Malta: 1 for 1

Peru: none

Report

Though Malta was beaten in a surprisingly one-sided match by Iran, while Peru earned a great win over Singapore this didn't have an affect on their quarter-final. Indeed it was Steve Camilleri who made the difference once more. The Maltese scoring machine produced 7 goals apiece on the first two days, then the Iranians managed to switch him off totally – but the Peruvians couldn't copy that tactics, their defenders were unable to cope with the strength of the locals' captain.

Camilleri netted four right in the first period, one more arrived from a man-up when the Peruvian goalie was excluded so the home side rushed 5-1 ahead in eight minutes. And they didn't slow down in the second, one great goal followed the other and even though the Latin Americans could also found the back of the net for a couple of times, the match was already decided by halftime as Malta led 10-3 and the count for Stevie the Great stood at 6.

Soon he reached his usual figure by converting a penalty and netted No. 8 from a counter giving Malta a 14-4 lead. Soon they bettered their own single-game scoring record set in this tourney on Day 1 against Tunisia (19 goals) and Camilleri also hit double digits, finishing the encounter with 10 goals. It was a fine individual effort, though it was still far from the world famous scoring mark of Milivoj Bebic – the Croatian legend, who supervised this encounter as FINA Delegate, had netted 28 goals in one game at the World University Games in Kobe in 1985, against Guatemala...

Gergely Csurka, FINA Media Committee

With a convincing win Uruguay reached the semis first on a cloudy and windy day in Malta, at the FINA World Men's Water Polo Development Trophy. They sank Austria with 9-3 in a one-sided match, but at least offered some entertainment as they scored a couple of rather spectacular goals. Iran didn't have to go the distance either against Singapore, the Persians outpowered their rivals by and rolled over them in the third period. Group-winner Saudi Arabia was almost upset by Tunisia as the tournament's only winless side had a man-up in the dying seconds to force the shootout but couldn't put the ball away, so the Saudis advanced with a 10-9 win.



Steven Camilleri: the perfect 10

Malta joined the semis as the last team, they had an unexpectedly easy ride against Peru, decided the match by halftime when they were 10-3 up already. They set a new scoring record for this tournament by finishing the game with 21 goals, almost half of those came from Steve Camilleri who found back to his devastating scoring form and netted 10 goals in the evening.

The favourite sides made the semis, so the Saturday night fever is expected to go really high here in Malta...

Schedule for Friday

For places 5-8

15.30: Peru v Tunisia

16.50: Austria v Singapore

Semi-finals

18.10: Uruguay v Iran

19.30: Malta v Saudi Arabia
