

USA-Russia, Canada-Netherlands in Water Polo Super Final semifinals

Match 13, 15:00, SPAIN 11 RUSSIA 12 in penalty shootout (FT: 8-8. Pens 3-4).

Results & Teams

Match 13, 15:00, SPAIN 11 RUSSIA 12 in penalty shootout (FT: 8-8. Pens 3-4).

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

Referees: Ursula Wengenroth (SUI), Diana Dutilh-Dumas (NED)

Extra Man: ESP: 1/10. RUS: 2/13

Penalties: Nil.

Teams:

SPAIN: Laura Esta, Marta Bach, Anna Espar (2), Beatriz Ortiz, Matilde Ortiz (1), Helena Lloret (3 +1), Clara Espar, Pilar Pena, Judith Forca, Anna Gual (+1), Maica Garcia (2 +1), Paula Leiton, Elena Sanchez.
Head Coach: Miguel Oca.

RUSSIA: Anastasia Verkhoglyadova, Veronika Vakhitova, Ekaterina Prokofyeva (+1), Elvina Karimova (+1), Maria Borisova (1), Olga Gorbunova (+1), Alena Serzhantova, Anastasia Simanovich (2), Anna Timofeeva (1), Nataliya Churzina (1), Evgeniya Ivanova (1), Daria Ryzhkova (2 +1), Anna Karnaukh. Head Coach: Alexander Gaydukov.

Report



To give up a three-goal lead in the final quarter is unforgivable. To then fail to win the penalty shootout, unlucky, such is the inexact science of the event. Spain controlled much of the match and but for a two-minute period could now be readying for Friday's semifinals. Not so. Russia will be wondering how it managed to let the match slip so far and then regain it enough to survive the shootout. Russia had the better of the opening quarter, while Spain looked the more determined and stronger team in the second, although levelling the eight minutes. That positive atmosphere in the Spanish camp went well into the third period. Spain took the first lead and tied the match 3-3 with three minutes left in the half and again at 1:02. Spain regained parity early in the third and went ahead at 3:38. Spain's offence revolved around Helena Lloret converting extra man, Anna Espar from the outside and Maica Garcia at centre forward. Russia relied on a tightly structured extra-man attack, which has served well all week. Daria Ryzhkova struck twice from deep right with her second goal slipping through the usually reliable hands of Laura Ester. Spain is particularly dangerous close in and Matilde Ortiz received a heavily defended ball across the cage to score a metre from the line, a minute short of time, for a handsome 7-5 advantage. Lloret scored her third at 4:54 in the fourth as Spain calmly kept passing after the exclusion period had expired to go to 8-5. Then Russia struck — three goals, to level at 8-8, with Simanovich, Evgeniya Ivanova and Maria Borisova striking within two minutes. Each side had an opportunity in the final minute with Spain's shot hitting the stomach of the Russian goalkeeper and Ekaterina Prokofyeva's pressured last attempt also being snapped up by the goalkeeper. This meant a penalty shootout. Spain's first two attempts met with a Russian hand, as did the second Russian attempt. The next six were converted and Russia moved into the semifinals and Spain the play-offs for fifth to eighth. The extra-man count was more a tribute to the defence than poor shooting, although pressure made some shots go wide.



Pictures: Russell McKinnon

Quotes

Andrey Belofastov (RUS) — Assistant Coach

“The most important thing is that we did a big comeback in the last quarter — three goals to level the match

was really good. But today we had two probably extra-man goals not go in because of bad passing and we missed two goals at centre forward for Spain. We must be lucky because we won the penalties 5-4. We are happy to be in the finals but not happy with our totality. It is very hard to win a game like this.”

Match 15, 16:30, NETHERLANDS 18 JAPAN 7
Results & Teams

Match 15, 16:30, NETHERLANDS 18 JAPAN 7

Quarters: 2-1, 6-1, 4-3, 6-2

Referees: William MacKay (CAN), Nicola Johnson (AUS)

Extra Man: NED: 6/8. JPN: 0/8.

Penalties: NED: 0/1. JPN: 0/1.

Teams:

NETHERLANDS: Laura Aarts, Roseanne Voorvelt (1), Dagmar Genee (1), Catharina van der Sloot (1), Kitty-Lynn Joustra (2), Iris Wolves (1), Bente Rogge (2), Vivian Sevenich (1), Maud Megens (5), Ilse Koolhaas (1), Simone van de Kraats (3), Brigitte Sleeking, Debby Willemrz. Head Coach: Arno Havenga.

JAPAN: Minami Shioya, Yumi Arima, Akari Inaba (1), Shino Magariyama, Chiaki Sakanoue (1), Minori Yamamoto (1), Maiko Hashida (1), Yuki Niizawa (1), Kana Hosoya, Misaki Noro (1), Marina Tokumoto, Kotori Suzuki (1), Miyuu Aoki. Head Coach: Makihiko Motomiya.

Report



Despite the opening quarter, Netherlands was always going to win this encounter, with the Japanese struggling to match it with the bigger athletes. Determination was never in question, but the second quarter was a telling factor in how the rest of the match would flow. Maud Megens was her usual forceful self when scoring, having four by the last break and fired in a fifth on counter with a minute remaining and Simone van de Kraats enjoyed scoring on extra-man attack. For the Dutch it was a chance to try tactics ahead of the

semifinals and to get every player in the pool, tasting top-class action. For Japan, it is another step to Tokyo 2020. Six players scored as the Japanese printed, drove, fought on defence and tried everything to stop the juggernaut Netherlands.



Pictures: Russell McKinnon

Quotes

Arno Havenga (NED) — Head Coach

“It was a strange game, at least in the first period as we got used to the different style of play. You are never satisfied as so many strange things were going on. In the end we won 18-7 and that is a big score to qualify for the semifinals. Now we have to get ready for this.”

Suguru Hamada (JPN) — Team Leader

“The best part was the first quarter and the fact that we never gave up. Shooting was easy (for Netherlands)

and they could push off us, which was very bad. They are much stronger than us, especially Number 5 (Kitty-Lynn Joustra at centre forward) and Number 9 (Maud Megens) is a very good shooter. We needed for her not to shoot. My team gained zero exclusions at centre back, which was not good.”

Match 16, 18:00, AUSTRALIA 1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 12
Results & Teams

Match 16, 18:00, AUSTRALIA 1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 12

Quarters: 0-1, 0-2, 1-5, 0-4

Referees: Maro Savinovic (CRO), Kazuzo Moribayashi (JPN)

Extra Man: AUS: 0/5. USA: 2/5.

Penalties: Nil.

Teams:

AUSTRALIA: Lilian Hedges, Madeleine Steere, Hannah Buckling, Elle Armit, Isobel Bishop, Bronwen Knox, Pascale Casey, Amy Ridge, Zoe Arancini, Jess Zimmerman, Morgan Baxter (1), Lena Mihailovic, Gabriella Palm. Head Coach: Athanasios Kechagias.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Ashleigh Johnson, Brigitta Games, Melissa Seidemann (1), Rachel Fattal, Paige Hauschild (1), Margaret Steffens (2), Kaleigh Gilchrist (1), Kiley Neushul, Aria Fischer (2), Jamie Neushul (2), Stephanie Haralabidis (2), Alys Williams (1), Gabrielle Stone. Head Coach: Adam Krikorian.

Report



The third quarter is nearly always the defining moments in which teams transform matches. This is where the true experience of USA shone through after a torrid first half in which only three goals were scored, and they were all for the reigning “Champion of Everything”. The Aussie Sharks could not breach Ashleigh

Johnson's long arms no matter how hard they tried. USA was not having it own way at the other end, either. This was typical of USA-Australian encounters stretching way back, even past that sensational first Olympic final at Sydney 2000. One-goal margins were the norm for more than a decade. It was the third period where USA hit full tempo, taking the score to 8-1. Yes, Australia scored, finally, through Morgan Baxter at 5:36. It took more than 18 minutes to make the scoresheet. The frenzy of USA goals came from both sides of the pool, the top, centre forward and a few points in between. And the exciting part? Eight different scorers for USA. By this stage there were just four major fouls on Australia and three on USA. Captain Maggie Steffens became the first multi-scorer with a close-in shot early in the fourth and soon after Australia could not convert one of the rare extra-man attempts. Jamie Neushul converted USA's fifth extra-man attempt for two goals, to bring up double figures and Aria Fischer netted her second with a long slider finding the right bottom corner. Stephanie Haralabidis joined the party with a lob from deep right, off the upright, for what was an amazing match.





Pictures: Russell McKinnon

Quotes

Natalie Benson (USA) — Assistant Coach

“Australia plays a strong, physical game and zoned pretty early and we struggled against this. We were indecisive and passive and passed up on some good opportunities to get the ball into centre and from the perimeter. Their goalie (Gabriella Palm) was reading the shots well. Our defence held down in the first half, especially in the first quarter, and in the second half we capitalised on offence.”

Taryn Woods (AUS) — Assistant Coach

“They had a couple of strong centre forwards and two strong centre backs. They played a heavy, physical game. We missed a few shots early on and didn’t get as much space to execute. Credit to them for the win. We’re persevering with systems. It’s what we’ve been working on and we haven’t been outlandish to get a result.”

Match 14, 19:30, CHINA 2 CANADA 5

Results & Teams

Match 14, 19:30, CHINA 2 CANADA 5

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

Referees: Adil Aimbetov (KAZ), Steven Rotsart (USA)

Extra Man: CHN: 0/5. CAN: 1/4.

Penalties: CAN: 1/1.

Teams:

CHINA: Lin Peng, Xinyan Wang, Jiawen Lu, Ying Zhai, Guannan Niu, Ning Guo, SanFeng Nong (1), Cong Zhang, Huan Wang (1), DanYi Zhang, Xiao Chen, Jing Zhang, YiNeng Shen. Head Coach: Dali Gong.

CANADA: Claire Wright, Krystina Alogbo, Axelle Crevier (1), Emma Wright (2), Monika Eggens, Kelly

McKee, Joelle Bekhazi, Elyse Lemay-Lavoie, Hayley McKelvey (1), Gurdreet Sohi, Kindred Paul, Shae Fournier (1), Clara Vulpisi. Head Coach: Haris Pavlidis.

Report



Canada, as the 2017 silver medallist, would have been expected to win this encounter. However, China has been the form team this tournament, pushing teams and playing up to the crowd. It seemed there were more Canadian spectators in the crowd tonight and they thrilled at the performance of their team and their cheering was well rewarded. China's shooting was "terrible" according to head coach Dali Gong. Canada opened the scoring and more than five minutes later, China retaliated. China went into the lead through Huan Wang at the start of the second quarter and it was not until 56 seconds from halftime that Canada again made the scoresheet, via Axelle Crevier's score from left hand catch. It was nearly 14 minutes between Canadian goals. Then the problem came for China. That 5:13 strike was the last goal for what was the end of the match — more than 21 minutes. Canada drilled the net twice in the third, at 7:37 Hayley McKelvey and then from Emma Wright from the wide right on extra at 2:58. It was 4-2 and neither side could improve the score before the final break. The Canadian defence was good, especially with Number 13, Clara Vulpisi, getting more than her share of ball in goal. In fact, she finished with the staggering statistic of 14 saves, probably the best of the tournament. Time and again China was on target only for Vulpisi to deny what would be a passage to the semifinals. China must have targeted Monika Eggens, as she could get little to use in front of goal. China went to a timeout at 3:15 in the final quarter and the resulting shot was taken from two metres in front and was smacked down by Vulpisi. It was the story of China's night. This led to counter and a penalty foul, which Emma Wright converted for an unassailable 5-2 lead with 2:11 on the clock. China tried for quick goals, to no avail, and Canada was once again was back in the semifinals. Birthday boy and legendary Spanish coach, who once led the Chinese women's team, was sitting on the Chinese bench, hoping for a better result than that achieved. It was another low-fouling match where the players had control and enthralled the crowd with their skills and patience.



Pictures: Russell McKinnon

Quotes

Haris Pavlidis (CAN) — Head Coach

“It was impressive defence and I’m happy with the result. In the second half our offence was better, but we did do some mistakes. We were nervous at the start but it is very important that for the second year we are in the semifinals.”

Dali Gong (CHN) — Head Coach

“Our defence was not good. Our shooting was not like yesterday. Our offence was good; our shooting was terrible. Their goalie was excellent. Now we have to prepare for the Asian Games (Indonesia in August-September). We are already thinking of tomorrow’s game against Japan. Today our players were very tired and tomorrow we play the early game, which is not good for us (China has played the last match for four days), but we will do our best. We have to keep improving our defence. It was a normal game, only our shooting was terrible.”

Russell McKinnon, FINA Media Committee Member

Kunshan, China, May 31.— Defending champion United States of America will play Russia and Canada will clash with Netherlands in the medal semifinals of the FINA Women's Water Polo World League Super Final at the Kunshan Sports Centre on Friday.

In the quarterfinals on Thursday, Russia was the first team to go to the semifinals, at the expense of Spain, coming back from three down in the final quarter to level at 8-8 and go on to win the shootout 4-3 for a 12-11 victory.

Netherlands swamped Japan 18-7 with Maud Megens slamming in five goals as the Japanese had no answer for the Dutch power, strength and shooting prowess.

Reigning champion United States of America survived a torrid opening half against Australia before swimming away with the match in the second half. From 3-0 at halftime, USA won 12-1.

Canada was the final qualifier with a dour 5-2 margin over China, achieved by shutting out the host nation for the last 21 minutes of the match; that and the brilliant goalkeeping of Clara Vulpisi with 14 saves.

Friday Schedule:

Semifinals

15:00, Spain v Australia

16:30, China v Japan

18:00, Russia v United States of America

19:30, Canada v Netherlands
