

World famous sporting greats conducted the WP draw for the World Championships in Zagreb

Gergely Csurka, FINA Media Committee

Water polo greats like the most successful coach in history Ratko Rudic and his colleague from the soccer field, Zlatko Dalic, head coach of the 2018 World Cup silver medallist Croatian team were on stage to conduct the draw of the water polo tournaments of the 2019 FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR).

As it's become usual, special appearance of sporting stars highlighted the draw for the water polo tournaments of the 2019 FINA World Championships to be held in Gwangju. The event was televised live from Zagreb, site of the World League Euro Cup finals and as a lead-up to the draw it featured some outstanding dancing performances.

On behalf of FINA, Executive Director Cornel Marculescu welcomed the guests in the grand ball room of Hotel Westin and he emphasised that already 192 countries confirmed its participation in Gwangju and more than 10,000 athletes are expected to take part in the following Masters World Championships. He thanks for the Croatian Water Polo Federation and the city of Zagreb for creating this brilliant environment for the ceremony of the draw.

The women's draw was conducted by two magnificent Croatian players Petra Bukic and Olympic and world champion Sandro Sukno – whose respective fathers Perica and Goran are living legends of the sport, won the 1984 Olympic title together for Yugoslavia.

Thanks to their hands, the prelims will already offer some thrilling games, first of all the clash of the reigning Olympic and world champion USA and the European champion Netherlands in Group A. Group B has three strong teams, Hungary, Russia and Canada, while Spain and Greece can go for a re-match of last year's European semis (painfully lost by the Spaniards at home in Barcelona). Italy and Australia will have a big game for the top spot in Group D.

The men's teams were sorted by the two coaching greats Ratko Rudic and Zlatko Dalic. They were not really merciful to their fellow Croatians as Group B looks the pretty tough as the No 1. teams of three other continents came together with the title-holders: USA, Australia and Kazakhstan. Group A will add another chapter to the outstanding battles between Serbia and Montenegro but with Greece drawn here this group looks the toughest of all. On the other hand, Italy seems to enjoy an easy cruise in Group D while Hungary and Spain shall have a nice showdown in Group C.

The water polo tournament shall kick off on 13 July in Gwangju.

Draw for the 2019 FINA World Championships

Men's tournament

Group A

Serbia, South Korea, Montenegro, Greece

Group B

United States, Croatia, Australia, Kazakhstan

Group C

South Africa, New Zealand, Spain, Hungary

Group D

Brazil, Germany, Italy, Japan

Women's tournament

Group A

South Africa, New Zealand, Netherlands, United States

Group B

Canada, Hungary, South Korea, Russia

Group C

Cuba, Greece, Kazakhstan, Spain

Group D

Japan, Italy, China, Australia
