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## PR 90 – WPWL 2020: Favourites prevail in Europe's first round

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Logic prevailed in the first round of the 2020 FINA Water Polo World League European preliminaries, which provided four games in the men's tournament and one match among women, on November 12, 2019. Italy, Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro are now the leaders of their respective groups in the men's competition, while Spain had a comfortable victory among women.

The most thrilling game of the round (for Group A) occurred in Piraeus, where Greece received its Italian counterpart. The Hellenic side managed to have a balanced first quarter (1-1), but the 2019 world champions made a decisive move towards victory in the second period, scoring four goals (against one for the locals). Despite the Greek reaction (2-1) in the third quarter, Italy managed to control operations until the end, sealing the victory in 9-6.

In Group B, the Magyars were naturally favourite in Budapest against Russia. Hungary did not disappoint its fans, making the difference in the second period, with a clear 6-0. The final outcome of 14-6 for the locals left no doubt about the Magyar dominance.

In The Hague, playing for Group C, the Dutch team could not sustain the Serbian strength. Winners of the 2019 edition of the World League, the Balkan side definitively sealed the game's fate in the second quarter, with an expressive 7-1. The locals could never recover and had to concede a final defeat by 7-12.

In Group D, things were even easier for Montenegro, receiving Ukraine in Niksic. The hosts comfortably triumphed in the first quarter by 8-1, and then successively by 6-1, 5-1 and 4-0 until the final outcome of 23-3.

### **MEN'S RANKING:**

**Group A:** 1. Italy, 3 pts (1 win); 2. Greece, 0 pts (1 loss); 3. Georgia, 0 pts

**Group B:** 1. Hungary, 3 pts (1 win); 2. Russia, 0 pts (1 loss); 3. France, 0 pts

**Group C:** 1. Serbia, 3 pts (1 win); 2. Netherlands, 0 pts (1 loss); 3. Croatia, 0 pts

**Group D:** 1. Montenegro, 3 pts (1 win); 2. Ukraine, 0 pts (1 loss); 3. Spain, 0 pts

In women's action, the situation was also quite clear in Sabadell, where Spain (2019 world silver medallist) received France and easily won the encounter by 18-1 (partials of 5-0, 6-0, 6-1 and 1-0).

The first European round of the women's tournament will be completed on December 10 (Italy-Russia) and on December 23 (Greece-Hungary), while "Game Day 2" for the men will take place on December 17, with four matches (Italy-Georgia; Russia-France; Serbia-Croatia; Ukraine-Spain).

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