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PR 92 – WPWL 2020: Italy loses at home; Spain “sweats” to beat Hungary

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The second round of the 2020 FINA Women’s Water Polo World League preliminary phase in Europe took place this Tuesday November 19, with the celebration of three matches. Two of them were concluded on penalty sessions, with Italy losing its encounter at home (against the Netherlands), and Spain receiving and narrowly beating Hungary. Russia was the third winner of the evening, prevailing in French soil.

In Florence, the match opposing Italy to the Netherlands was undecided until the conclusion of the penalty shootout, with the advantage going to the visiting team. The regular time was quite balanced, with a 2-2 partial at the end of the first period, and then a short accumulated advantage for the Dutch at half time (8-7). Came the third period and the match remained tight, with a 3-3 partial. The last quarter was won by the Italians (2-1), with Izabella Chiappini scoring the last goal for the locals with 48 seconds to go, and then Simone Van De Kraats equalising at 12-12 with 33 seconds before the final whistle.

On the penalty session, Maud Megens, from the Dutch side, fails the first attempt, but Claudia Marletta (second) and Chiappini (third) are also unlucky on the Italian team. With four consecutive goals, the Netherlands then secures the final outcome (16-14, in its favour).

In Sabadell, the team of Spain (2019 world silver medallists) had also to wait for the penalty shootout, but was luckier than its Italian counterpart. The locals started stronger (6-1 at halftime), but a brilliant fourth period by the Hungarian team (4-0) allowed a 8-8 result at the end of the regular time. In the lottery of penalties, the locals managed to score three goals, while the Magyars spoiled their first, third and fourth attempt. Spain had been the winner of the sole encounter so far in the women’s tournament, on November 12, thus being the provisional leader of the women’s preliminary phase in Europe.

Finally, in Lille, host France could not overcome a stronger team of Russia, losing by 9-13. However, the French squad had some inspiring moments, namely in the second half of the game, when it managed to win the two respective periods by 3-2. The “difference” had however been made in the first two quarters of the game, when Russia had triumphed by 4-1, and then 5-2.

Provisional ranking:

1. Spain, 5 pts (2 wins, 0 loss); 2. Russia, 3 pts (1W, 0L); 3. Netherlands, 2 pts (1W, 0L); 4. Hungary, 1 pt (0W, 1L); 5. Italy, 1 pt (0W, 1L); 6. Greece, 0 pts (did not play so far); 7. France 0 pts (0W, 2L).
