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The return of the World League

FINA Communication Department

Preliminary action of the FINA Water Polo World League 2009 will already begin next month! Here's an introduction to the way the competition will unfold: In the men's field of the European division, three groups of four national teams begin squaring-off as early as mid-January. In a change of qualification procedure from 2008 League play, the men's European teams will not play-off in tournaments, but through a series of six individual home or away matches scheduled over five months. Every one of the twelve teams will face an opposing team from their group in games scheduled on January 21, February 17, March 10, April 14, May 5 and May 12. Four teams from Europe - including the team from the host nation - will advance to the eight-team Super Final, which will be held from June 16-21 in Montenegro.

In total, 21 teams from five continents will contest the World League preliminary rounds. In the Asia-Oceania group, four teams will play-off in two tournaments in May to be held in Australia and New Zealand, of which two will advance to the Super Final. The preliminary round of the Africa group of four teams will also be held in May and will probably take place in Morocco, although this is yet to be confirmed. One African team - the winner of the preliminary tournament - will advance to the Super Final. Lastly, the sole representative team from the Americas will be the United States, which is automatically entered into the Super Final.

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21 teams will compete in the 2009 Men's World League

Fourteen teams are scheduled to contest the FINA Water Polo World League preliminaries in 2009, beginning in the month of May. In the Europe/Africa division (named as such because South Africa will join the Europe preliminary round), two groups of four teams will play-off in two tournaments held on May 8-10 and May 22-24. Besides a May 8-10 tournament confirmed for France, the locations have yet to be finalised but may include Spain, Germany and Great Britain. Four of these teams - including the host Russia - will advance to the eight-team Super Final from June 9-14 in Kirishi (RUS).

In Asia-Oceania, a group of four teams will contest two preliminary tournaments on May 22-24 in Australia and May 29-31 in New Zealand. Two teams from this group will advance to the Super Final. Finally, from the Americas national teams of Canada and the United States will compete with one another. Although both teams will advance to the Super Final, they will still hold preliminary games over the weekend of May 29-31, probably in California (USA), although this must still be

confirmed.

Men's League Programme

Preliminaries

Group Americas - Team: USA (automatically advances to Super Final)

Group Asia/Oceania – Teams: AUS, IRI, JPN, NZL - Tournament dates/locations: May 22-24 (AUS); May 29-31 (NZL)

Group Africa – Teams: ALG, LBA, MAR, RSA – Tournament date/location: May (MAR) tbc.

Group Europe – Teams: Group A – SRB, GRE, HUN, FRA; Group B – MNE, ITA, ROU, GBR; Group C – ESP, CRO,

RUS, GER –

Game dates/locations: See schedule below:

Group A

1st match – 21.01.09: SRB vs. FRA, GRE vs. HUN
2nd match – 17.02.09: GRE vs. FRA, SRB vs. HUN
3rd match – 10.03.09: HUN vs. FRA, GRE vs. SRB
4th match – 14.04.09: FRA vs. SRB, HUN vs. GRE
5th match – 05.05.09: FRA vs. GRE, HUN vs. SRB
6th match – 12.05.09: SRB vs. GRE, FRA vs. HUN

Group B

1st match – 21.01.09: MNE vs. GBR, ITA vs. ROU
2nd match – 11.02.09: ITA vs. GBR, 17.02.09: MNE vs. ROU
3rd match – 10.03.09: ROU vs. GBR, 03.03.09: ITA vs. MNE
4th match – 14.04.09: GBR vs. MNE, 15.04.09: ROU vs. ITA
5th match – 05.05.09: GBR vs. ITA, ROU vs. MNE
6th match – 12.05.09: MNE vs. ITA, GBR vs. ROU

Group C

1st match – 21.01.09: CRO vs. RUS, ESP vs. GER
2nd match – 17.02.09: CRO vs. GER, ESP vs. RUS
3rd match – 10.03.09: CRO vs. ESP, RUS vs. GER
4th match – 14.04.09: RUS vs. CRO, GER vs. ESP
5th match – 05.05.09: GER vs. CRO, RUS vs. ESP
6th match – 12.05.09: ESP vs. CRO, GER vs. RUS

Super Final (8 Teams)

- 1 from Group Americas (USA)
- 2 from Group Asia/Oceania
- 1 from Group Africa
- 4 from Group Europe (including Super Final hosts Montenegro)

Women's League Programme

Preliminaries

Group Americas – Teams: CAN & USA – Tournament date/location: May 29-31 (California, USA tbc.)

Group Asia/Oceania – Teams: AUS, CHN, JPN & NZL - Tournament dates/locations: May 22-24 (AUS); May 29-31 (NZL)

Group Europe/Africa – Teams: Group A - RUS, GRE, GBR, GER; Group B – ESP, ITA, FRA, RSA - Tournament dates/locations: May 8-10 (GBR tbc. for Group A, FRA for Group B); May 22-24 (GER tbc. for Group A, ESP tbc. for Group B)

Super Final (8 Teams)

- 2 from Group Americas (CAN & USA)
 - 2 from Group Asia/Oceania
 - 4 from Group Europe/Africa (including Super Final hosts Russia)
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