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## Water Polo Men, Day 6: HUN 11 CRO 10

FINA Communication Department

Winning games is all about winning percentages and Hungary had the better figures in knocking Olympic champion Croatia out of the gold-medal contention in the men's competition. Hungary won 11-10, shutting Croatia down in the extra-man situation with stunning figures of converting four from eight and restricting Croatia to six goals from 15 attempts. What was even more telling was the two penalty saves by Hungary's goalkeeper, Viktor Nagy. The excitement started early and continued throughout from Miklos Gor-Nagy's opening goal until Petar Muslim's 3-2 goal at 3:06, the quarter-time score.

Marton Vamos scored on extra and Norbert Madaras on a beautiful counter attack in the first three minutes of the second quarter. Paulo Obradovic responded on extra for 4-4.

Then the Marton Szivos connection started. Son and grandson of Olympic water polo champions, Szivos scored two goals from well outside at the top in half a minute for 6-4. It was a margin that Croatia struggled with even though Maro Jokovic scored on extra for 6-5 down at halftime.

Jokovic had a chance to level at the start of the second half but his penalty attempt was blocked by Nagy. Denes Varga and Niksa Dobud swapped goals and Marton Vamos took it back out to two at 8-6.

Sandro Sukno scored on extra with 11 seconds left in the third period and all the Croatian fans went wild. Hungary shut down the celebrations and erupted another zone of the large stadium when it earned an ejection and the ball went to the loose Szivos on the far post to score for 9-7 at 0:02.

Krisztian Bedo opened the final quarter from centre forward for 10-7. Sukno responded from the top and Muslim could have taken it to one goal had he not had his penalty shot stopped by Nagy with his eighth save.

Croatia pulled one back through Andelo Setka when he challenged the goalkeeper on the line near the right upright, flipped the ball up with his right hand and patted it into goal with his left over Nagy's head for 10-9.

Jokovic equalised from the deep right on the skinniest of angles. However, on the next attack, Daniel Varga speared a pass down the right post for brother Denes Varga to steer back into goal for 11-10. What brilliance at such a vital stage of the match!

Croatia took a timeout at 1:11 and gave Jokovic the chance to convert, instead firing it over the goal. Hungary called a timeout and protected the ball for the last 21 seconds for victory and a shot at the title.

It was billed as a rematch of the 2007 Melbourne World Championships final and the 2011 Shanghai bronze-medal encounter.

{youtube}m5QpTlrksg4{/youtube}

### **Match 39: 20:15, Semifinal Round 1-4, HUNGARY 11 CROATIA 10**

Quarters: 2-3, 4-2, 3-2 2-3

Referees: Daniel Flahive (AUS), Sergy Naumov (RUS).

Extra Man: HUN: 4/6 (4/8). CRO: 6/9 (6/15)

Pens: CRO: 0/2

#### **Teams:**

##### **HUNGARY:**

Viktor Nagy, Miklos Gor-Nagy (1), Norbert Madaras (1), Bence Batori, Marton Vamos (3), Norbert Hosnyanszky, Adam Decker, Marton Szivos (3), Daniel Varga, Denes Varga (2), Krisztian Bedo (1), Balazs Harai, Attila Decker. Head Coach: Tibor Benedek.

**CROATIA:** Josip Pavic, Luke Loncar,

Ivan Milakovic, Fran Paskuvalin, Maro Jokovic (2), Luka Bukic, Petar Muslim (1), Andro Busilje, Sandro Sukno (2), Niksa Dobud (2), Andelo Setka (1), Paulo Obradovic (2), Marko Bijac. Head Coach: Ivica Tucak.

#### **FLASH QUOTES:**

##### **Attila Decker (HUN):**

“We are really happy to have won the match. There were a lot of exclusions, but we played from the heart and that helped us to win, we are now aiming for gold.”

##### **Denes Varga (HUN):**

“It was a very physical and tactical game. Now we are concentrating on gold.”

**Daniel Varga (HUN):**

"I am very happy now. Now we have a few hours to celebrate this victory, but from tomorrow morning we have to focus on the final. No matter who is in the final, because I believe it depends on us, and how we will play. About today, I expected such an equal result Croatia is a very good team. They are the gold medallist from the Olympic Games, so I expected such a tough game."

**Josip Pavic (CRO):**

“It has been a very hard game where defence was very important. We made many mistakes and missed two penalties. We have to prepare for the next game, watch the playback and get ready. If I had to choose I would say Montenegro is a better chance for us to win against.”

**Maro Jokovic (CRO):**

“If we got our two penalties we could have won. We can only blame ourselves.”

**Niksa Dobud (CRO):**

“I don't know what happened. We were constantly gaining on them and then falling behind for the whole game. But I guess you can't win everything.”

**Ivica Tucak (CRO Head coach):**

“We missed the most important shots, but I still have to congratulate the team on their great effort.”

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