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Water Polo Men, Day 6: MNE 10 ITA 8

FINA Communication Department

Montenegro ended Italy's World Championship reign with a staggering 10-8 victory in front of a near-packed crowd at Bernat Picornell Pool. Italy was shell-shocked with Montenegro's start to the match, from Aleksandar Ivovic's lightning shot from the top of the first attack, through Mladan Janovic's extra-man goal from the top and the Nikola Janovic's penalty goal — 3-0 at 4:04. That was a huge shock that Italy had severe difficulty adjusting to after five straight victories in Barcelona. Matteo Aicardi splashed in a rebound from one metre for 3-1.

The second quarter was like a summer drought for Italy with Mladan Janovic on penalty and Darko Brguljan from the deep right-hand catch position for 5-1 at halftime.

Italy's long-suffering supporters gained some relief when the hardest shot in the world and triple Olympian Pietro Figlioli unleashed his rocket from nine metres, skimming just centimetres across the top of the water under the right arm of Milos Scepanovic.

It was short-lived for Italy, sadly, as Nikola Janovic netted from deep left and 6-2 at 6:34. The shot went through two sets of arms and creased the crossbar. Antonia Petrovic at centre forward and Aicardi with another rebound shot, this time from three metres, progressed the score to 7-3.

Nikola Janovic scored his third after a timeout ploy, Valentino Gallo replied from a deft lob and Darko Brguljan scored from the deep left on extra for 9-4 at 0:05. Ivovic set the seal on the match at 5:10 in the fourth, despite two more Figlioli goals and one from Christian Presciutti with a lob from the five-metre free throw. Montenegro tried to settle it down with a timeout for no joy while Italy scored a controlled goal on extra in the last seven seconds to Aicardi for his third.

Italy's reign was over and now must look for a bronze medal against Croatia on Saturday. It was also the first time these two teams have met at the World Championships.

Match 40: 21:45, Semifinal Round 1-4, MONTENEGRO 10 ITALY 8

Quarters: 3-1, 2-0, 4-3, 1-4
Referees: Boris Margeta (SLO), Radoslaw Koryzna (POL).
Extra Man: MNE: 2/4 (2/8). ITA: 2/7 (2/9).
Pens: MNE: 2/2.

Teams:

MONTENEGRO:

Zdravko Radic, Drasko Brguljan, Vjekoslav Paskovic, Antonio Petrovic (1), Darko Brguljan (2), Ugo Crousillat, Mladan Janovic (2), Nikola Janovic (3), Aleksandar Ivovic (2), Sasa Misic, Filip Klikovac, Predrag Jokic, Milos Scepanovic. Head Coach: Ranko Perovic.

ITALY: Stefano

Tempesti, Amaurys Perez, Niccolo Gitto, Pietro Figlioli (3), Alex Georgetti, Maurizio Felugo, Niccolo Figari, Valentino Gallo (1), Christian Presciutti (1), Deni Fiorentini, Matteo Aicardi (3), Christian Napolitano, Marco Del Lungo. Head Coach: Alessandro Campagna.

FLASH QUOTES:

Mladan Janovic (MNE):

“We entered this game full force just like we should and our defence was on maximum. Towards the end we were saving our strength because we know the final against Hungary will be difficult. They are an exceptional team and we must be on form.”

Nikola Janovic (MNE):

“I’m overly happy, I’m overjoyed! I’m so proud of my team, especially Scepanovic. There will be no partying tonight, we have our eyes on the finals.”

Sasa Misic (MNE):

“Our determination and the extent to which we really want this right now came through and this is what won the game.”

Darko Brguljan (MNE):

"We're really happy. When we play for the gold that always makes you feel nervous, but we will do our best to win."

Ranko Perovic (MNE Head coach):

"I'm really happy in this moment, it was good to play against that great team (Italy). I want to congratulate my players for the fantastic match, we were always high on the score."

Amaurys Perez (ITA):

“Montenegro finished the attacks better than us, we were unlucky when trying to put the ball in the net. They have played very well. And now we need to concentrate on the next game, there is still a medal to fight for.”

Christian Napolitano (ITA):

“Montenegro is a very good team, and they have played an amazing game, they simply were better today. We have to prepare for the next game, Croatia is going to be hard, but we’ll try to win the bronze medal.”
