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PR 4 - WPWL: Croatia, France, Greece and Montenegro, first winners in 2020

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Croatia, France, Greece and Montenegro were the winners in the first 2020 round of the European preliminaries of the FINA Men's Water Polo World League, after four matches contested on February 11.

In Tbilisi, playing for Group A, Georgia received Greece, but could not overcome the Hellenic strength, losing by 7-19. The visitors controlled operations throughout the entire match, with partials of 5-1, 4-2, 5-3 and 5-1 in their favour. On the winning side, Angelos Vlachopoulos was the most prolific scorer, with four goals.

In Group B, France was successful in Limoges, by defeating Hungary 15-10. The Magyars managed to balance the game in the second (3-3) and fourth (2-2) period, but the locals made the difference in the first (5-3) and third (5-2) quarter. Michal Izdinsky delighted the local fans with three goals.

In Varazdin, Croatia received the team of Netherlands in Group C, and comfortably won by 16-7. Until half of the match, the Dutch squad remained in the fight (5-3 and 2-2), but the Balkans then "accelerated" in the third (4-1) and fourth (5-1) partial. Maro Jokovic (CRO) was particularly successful, with six goals.

Finally, in Oviedo, playing in Group D, Spain could not prevail, facing a strong team of Montenegro. Despite a balanced first period (2-2), the visitors then proceed on to a 2-1, 5-2 and 2-1 in their favour. Dragan Draskovic (MNE, four goals) decisively contributed to the final outcome of 11-6 for this team.

With all European teams having now played two games, the provisional ranking of the four groups is as follows:

GROUP A: 1. Italy, 6 pts (2W); 2. Greece, 3 pts (1W, 1L); 3. Georgia, 0 pts (2L)?

GROUP B: 1. France, 4 pts (1W, 1L); 2. Hungary, 3 pts (1W, 1L); 3. Russia, 2 pts (1W, 1L)?

GROUP C: 1. Serbia, 6 pts (2W); 2. Croatia, 3 pts (1W, 1L); 3. Netherlands, 0 pts (2L)?

GROUP D: 1. Montenegro, 6 pts (2W); 2. Spain, 3 pts (1W, 1L); 3. Ukraine, 0 pts (2L)

For the women's tournament, one match was also scheduled in Limoges, opposing France to the Netherlands, but the game had to be postponed due to adverse weather conditions in central Europe, causing the cancellation of many flights across the continent.
