

## WP World Cup (W), Surgut, Day 1: Favorites show class and win openers

Game 1. NZL vs. USA 2-18 (1-5, 1-3, 0-6, 0-4)  
Results & Teams

Game 1. NZL  vs. USA  2-18 (1-5, 1-3, 0-6, 0-4)

**Referees:** Florestano (BRA), Meng (CHN)

**Extra Man:** NZL 1/4, USA 3/4

**Penalty:** NZL 0/0, USA 1/1

**NEW ZEALAND:** Jessica Ann Milicich, Isabella Frances Lattey Morrison, Bernadette Gabrielle Doyle, Gabryel Patricia Masina Oloapu, Alexandra Rose Boyd, Emily Charlotte Nicholson, Emmerson Joy Houghton, Katie Mary McKenty, Grace Elizabeth Hume Tobin, Morgan Leigh McDowall (2), Kirsten Patricia Hudson, Kate Janelle Enoka, Chantelle Sara Controy.

**USA:** Ashleigh Johnson, Jordan Raney (2), Stephanie Haralabidis (2), Rachel Fattal (1), Paige Hauschild, Margaret Steffens, Jamie Neushul (1), Kiley Neushul (5), Aria Fischer (4), Kaleigh Gilchrist, Makenzie Fischer (1), Alys Williams (2), Amanda Longan.

### Report

There was no hidden intrigues behind the carpet. USA is a clear favorite wherever they go. New Zealand is young and inexperienced. The thing they could offer against such class opponents was their drive, energy and devotion. Adam Krikorian coached side beat Kiwis in all game's components. They shot well, worked for the kick-outs and used extra-man to excellent effect. Overall, they converted 3 out of 4 moments, leaving New Zealand ladies up to chase a chance to respond.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

New Zealand struggled to get the ball to the centre forwards, but when it did arrive, the shots came under too much pressure to have any chance. On the contrary, USA centers were very successful, making their efficient play one of the main components of the Americans eventual win.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Americans took their time to warm up in the 1st quarter. They kicked off the glass after just over a minute of play congratulating Jordan Raney which made good use of the extra-man challenge once dished by Aria Fisher, 0-1. New Zealand did not look neither confused nor awkward, they fought hard for the ball, did not avoid clashes and counterparts, showing in every way, that they were having a special mood against a notorious opponent. Morgan McDowell deceived Stephanie Halabridis on the way to her shooting point, and converted her chance, 1-1 at the clock counting the third minute. Jessica Milicich was quite good at the goals, showing her saving art, buy there was too much pressure and work for her non-stop. New testing

water polo rules have substantially raised speed and tempo of the game. One attack followed by another, which was definitely a honey on the pie for the US team. Kiley Neushul converted a penalty, then Aria and McKenzie Fisher, and Jamie Neushul produced class action goals to seal the first quarter at 5-1 in their team's favour.

The only thing New Zealand ladies could do at that moment – or rather what Americans let them do – was another extra-man story completed by McDowell at the close of the 2nd period, which set the first half's score at 2-8 for the reigning queens.

The third chapter of the USA vs. New Zealand was opened by a hat-trick of Kiley Neushul en route to her best player and scorer award in this match, and concluded by Raney Jordan, scoring her second extra-man goal of the day. Angela Winstanley-Smith and her team never gave up though, seeking luck at their goals, but in vain – nothing was fruitful.

## Quotes

### **Alexandra Rose Boyd, #5 and captain of the team New Zealand:**

It was a tough game against a world class opponent, but we kept fighting till the end and never gave up. Playing on new rules made the game very different, but there was nothing really, which we could not have expected from such a great team as USA. The game has become very quick, a lot more swimming, but we hope to get used to it. We will be looking to improve each game. This game was a great experience against a very strong opponent. We played the world class team in a world class complex. We are happy to be a part of the World Cup, and we like Surgut a lot. The swimming pool is very light and cosy, and it is a pleasure to play in such a great facility.

### **Kiley Neushul, team USA #8:**

This was not our best showing. We did not execute a lot on our offensive plays early in the game. We started a little slowly, and I think we can improve coming up here in the tournament. As the game went on we could have got a little bit more, hopefully we will be able to use all the moments further in the tournament. We never considered New Zealand an easy opponent, like every team here, we are sure they will be looking to show their best game against us. We want to be the best every game, so we are happy to celebrate the first win in Surgut. It was a good warm-up for the next games.

Game 2. AUS vs. CHN 11-8 (2-0, 3-3, 2-4, 4-1)

Results & Teams

Game 2. AUS  vs. CHN  11-8 (2-0, 3-3, 2-4, 4-1)

**Referees:** Severo (ITA), Willis (RSA)

**Extra Man:** AUS 3/6 CHN 2/8

**AUSTRALIA:** Lilian Hedges, Keesja Gofers (1), Hannah Buckling (1), Bronte Halligan, Isobel Bishop (2), Bronnen Knox (2), Rowie Webster (4), Amy Ridge (1), Zoe Arancini, Alice Williams, Morgan Baxter,

Pascalie Casye, Gabriella Palm.

**CHINA:** Lin Peng, Ying Zhai (1), Xiaohan Mei, Dunhan Xiong, Xinyan Wang (2), Nong Guo, Jiawen Lu, Wang Huan (1), Panyi Zhang (1), Xiao Chen (1), Jing Zhang (2).

## Report

China turned competitive against Australia. Initially taken as a simple story, where vice-champion was to give a lesson to the Asian journey, the game turned to be a surprise and brought a parade of shots, keeping in suspense the audience till the last seconds. Chinese were a mess at start and looked stumbled, but soon returned senses to come back strongly in the game.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Australians set pace in the first period. Captain Webster opened the score a little over a minute after the game's start. Isabel Bishop doubled the lead completing her mission at the low post to make it a 2-0 game for her nation. There came a lot of fighting and swimming, which brought no fruits to either side.

The scoring draught was broken in the midst of the next frame and the opponents fruited three goals apiece. One shall remember a beautiful combination, finished by Jing Zhang of China, which threw a long-distance shot reaching the right upper corner if the Australian goallie. Rowena Webster used her gun twice, both in action and in extra-man chances. Teams traded points to leave the gap unchanged by the large break, 5-3 in favor of Australia.

Chinese never gave up and managed to level the chances at one quarter left in the match-up, 7-7. However, the tie turned out to be the best they could have achieved that afternoon. No matter hard it was for the Aussie stingers, they found the right mood to revive in the last 8. Crucial for Chinese was the exclusion for brutality of Guo Ning at some 2 minutes left to go, and they grew sad, and disappointed, and missed two goals within just a minute, 11-8.

## Quotes

### **Dali Gong, team China's head coach:**

I am not satisfied with the way my team played today. We missed a lot of chances and let a lot of gifts to our opponents. This was not supposed to be a difficult game. We managed to be competitive until the last period of the game, but our defence was not good. The best player in my team was number 5, Wang Xinyan, who scored two goals.

### **Isabel Bishop, team Australia #5, 1 goal:**

It is good to start the World Cup with a win. It was uneasy to play China today, because we know each other very well indeed. The new rules make it even interesting, especially without stoppage in play. We are just learning them, we are adapting, as soon as we have experience, we will get on better. I think, we were not perfect today. There is always something, which can be improved in the game. We are going to improve and get better on every game.

Game 3. RSA vs. CAN 3-18 (1-3, 0-5, 1-5, 1-5)

Results & Teams

Game 3. RSA  vs. CAN  3-18 (1-3, 0-5, 1-5, 1-5)

**Referees:** Zwart (NED), Johnson (AUS)

**Extra Man:** RSA 0/2 CAN 5/7

**Penalty:** RSA 0/0 CAN 0/2

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Daniela-Maria Passoni, Bianca Ann Prinsloo, Kieren-Ashleigh Paley, Nicola Emma Macleod, Georgia Janice Moir, Hallendorff Amica, Christine Elizabeth Abrahamse, Hanna Gail Muller, Zandre Smit, Claire Ann Whyte, Chloe Meecham, Kelsey White (3), Palesa Nompumelelo Ntombikayse Hlela.

**CANADA:** Claire Dawn Wright, Krystina Alogbo(4), Axelle Crevier, Emma Louise Wright (2), Monika Catharina Eggens (2), Kelly Blair McKee (1), Joelle Bekhazi (1), Elyse Lemay Lavoie (2), Hayley Ann McKelvey (1), Gurpreet Kaur Sohi (2), Kindred Ayre Paul (3), Shae Chantal Fournier.

### **Report**

Canada routed South Africa by 18-3, and captain Krystina Alogbo, who is not really a stranger in Surgut, knew components of this big win, which were the right mood, good physical form and right tactics. She contributed with four goals to help achieving the result. Converting powerplay chances proved out an important factor in this story, as Canadians killed 5 out of 7 "extras". They could definitely have done more, showing remarkably more composure than their opponents. The only scoring person for RSA was Kelsey White, which marked her first appearance at the World Cup by a hat-trick.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Canadians went three up and South Africa responded with a single. Monika Eggens opened up the duel, converting an extra-man attack for the go-ahead goal just to see a surprisingly fast response of South Africans setting a tomahawk at a 5 metres, 1-1. The balance did not last for long, as Canadians restored the habitual game's flow. Emma Wright and Krystina Alogbo completed their action missions, showcasing their individual shooting skills, and ended the first frame at 3-1 in their team's favor.

Maple Leave's scoring stats was largely improved in the second, as Daniela Maria Passoni of South Africa conceded five goals – two in the man-down, and three in counter-attacks.

Too much stress and loads were in store for her after a large break.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Krystina Alogbo and company never ceased shining bright at various angles and executing different shot's types. "Learn once we are here", - Canadian masters meant to tell their young opponents when scoring another "standard type" goal via center. Almost all ladies, having Southern African caps, are students and take water polo as a good hobby they respect a lot.

There was actually no surprise, that the fall of the third registered a double-digit lead of North Americans, 2-12, and soon it was even perfected to 3-18.

Quotes

**Daniela Maria Passoni, goalkeeper of the team South Africa:**

It is such a privilege to play the best water polo players of the world. All we can do is just to learn experience and study what they can show us. We are happy to be a part of the FINA World Cup, be a part of the vibe and spirit. We are very excited to play all our eventual opponents here, and we are expecting a big game against New Zealand. We really think we are going to give them a fight.

**Krystina Alogbo, team Canada's captain, 4 goals:**

Of course, we expected a different style of the game's flow, but this is our first game in Surgut. We needed to feel the water, and the ball, and the energy. South Africa is such a team which we don't see that often. This is the first game, so you don't have the video of your opponent. So you can engage a plea game. Today we just wanted to feel the game and get ready for the next challenging matches. In water polo you can never say that this or that game should be easy for you, because this is all about how you play your system and how you execute your system. And sometimes even with the teams like Japan that we do not see that often we throw out a different style of play, we have to adjust our system to the way they play.

I am happy I was named the best player of the match, but this is all about teamwork. I am a part of the team, which helped me to score as much as I did.

Game 4. ESP vs. RUS 9-13 (2-4, 3-2, 4-2, 0-5)

Results & Teams

Game 4. ESP  vs. RUS  9-13 (2-4, 3-2, 4-2, 0-5)

**Referees:** Savinovic (CRO), Deslieres (CAN)

**Extra Man:** ESP 2/9 RUS 5/7

**Penalty:** ESP 1/1 RUS 0/0

**SPAIN:** Laura Ester Ramos, Marta Bach Pascual, Anna Espar Llaquet (6), Beatriz Ortiz Munoz, Matilde Ortiz Reyes, Helena Lloret Gomez, Clara Espar Llaquet, Pilar Pena Carraso (2), Anna Gual Roviroso, Paula Crespi Barriga, Paula Leiton Arrones (1).

**RUSSIA:** Maria Bersneva (4), Ekaterina Prokofyeva (3), Elvina Karimova (1), Olga Gorbunova (2), Alena Serzhantova, Anastasia Simanovich, Anna Timofeeva (1), Evgeniia Soboleva, Evgeniia Ivanova (1), Daria Ryzhkova (1), Anna Karnaukh.

## Report

Hosts celebrated a difficult win over Spain in a mixed performance. The current world No.3 took lead with a relative ease, but complacency slipped into their game in the third quarter thus letting rookie opponents come closer and even edge them out narrowly. Russia did not give up though and did revival, winged by the home fans to hit five vital goals and raise back the question on the game's winner.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Russia had a better start with the rising Maria Berseneva and experienced Evgeniya Ivanova converting their extra-man chances, 0-2, after 2.30 from the kick-off. Anna Espar of Spain responded via a text-book penalty done well enough to book a very fruitful day at her office. Elvina Karimova and Daria Ryzhkova sent in two power rockets as the Red Fury were again on the scoreboard? Anna Espar exhibited her home-set trick for 2-4. She never stopped scoring though, the job she knows and does very well indeed. Earning 4 more out of 7 her team's overall "points" in the next two quarters, the go-in woman deservedly turned into the best scorer of the day on 6 goals.

Meanwhile, it was the midst of the second half, and the game grew closer. Hosts realized, they could not disappoint the crowd, which came to shout for them. And they did not.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Coach Andrey Belofastov, left alone on the bench this evening, was constantly looking for the ways to unlock Spanish defensive schemes. The keys were found in the last frame. Making good use of Marta Pascual's absence, excluded on three faults, early in the 4th period, Gorbunova and Prokofieva scored two goals apiece (three of them came in powerplay), and Maria Berseneva sealed the matchup at 9-13 for the home squad. Special compliments deserved Russian goalkeeper Sofia Karnaukh, conceding no balls and showcasing a number of spectacular saves in the last quarter.

Quotes

**Ekaterina Prokofieva, team Russia #3, best player of the match, 3 goals:**

We played an OK match, not the best, and there are a few reasons for that. On the one hand, it was the first game at the World Cup. On the other hand, we know our opponent too well. We have been playing them all the season long and it is very difficult to surprise each other with some tricks or inventions. It was a swinging game until the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, and we are happy we have managed to break the flow at that point.

**Miguel Oka, team Spain head coach:**

We have been very close to our opponents in the course of the game, but the last period turned out to be fruitful for Russia. It is very difficult to play Russia, they are always strong. They have got a good defence, good goalkeeper, they go very well in contra, and they got shooters and so on so forth. Now they have been playing at home, and there is no doubt for me that they will be looking to show their best game.

Olga Kamardina, FINA correspondent in Russia

USA opened their campaign in Surgut routing New Zealand. Host Russia took a slow start, but drove fast

against Spain. Australia edged out China narrowly, and Canada predictably recorded a double-digit victory over South Africa. Besides clashes, launching round robin story for the 18th FINA World Cup's edition, Competition Day 1 featured a concert, a show, and an official opening ceremony, which declared the competitions open. A number of important guests were present, representing FINA, LOC, and government authorities of the region.

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Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

## **FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup 2018**

### **Competition results**

Day 1 4 September, 2018

Match #1. 14:30 NZL  vs. USA  2-18 (1-5, 1-3, 0-6, 0-4)

Match #2. 16:00 AUS  vs. CHN  11-8 (2-0, 3-3, 2-4, 4-1)

Match #3. 17:30 RSA  vs. CAN  3-18 (1-3, 0-5, 1-5, 1-5)

Match #4. 19:00 ESP  – RUS  9-13 (2-4, 3-2, 4-2, 0-5)

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