Australia ousts Hungary in shootout, meets Serbia in the semis, Croatia, Spain also through

Quarter-final: Hungary v Australia 15-16 (pen)

Results & Teams

Game 13, 15.00 – Quarter-final: Hungary v Australia 15-16

Quarters: 2-1, 3-0, 2-4, 3-5 – pen: 5-6
Referees: Boris Margeta (SLO), Nenad Peris (CRO)

HUNGARY

Istvan Kardos (4/14, 28.5%, pen: 1/6), David Bisztritsanyi (pen: 0/1) – Miklos Gor-Nagy (1/3), Mark Kallay (1/4), Kristof Varnai (0/2), Matyas Pasztor (2/7), Toni Nemet (0/0), David Jansik (2/2), Gergo Kovacs (0/2), Balazs Erdelyi (2/3), Bence Batori (4/6), Krisztian Bedo (0/1), Adam Nagy (3/3). Coach: Tamas Marcz

AUSTRALIA

Joel Dennerley (2/7, 28.5%, pen: 1/4, Anthony Hrysanthos (4/9, 44.4%, pen: 0/3) – Richard Campbell (5/9), George Ford (0/0), Joseph Kayes (3/7), Nathan Power (0/2), Edwards Lachlan (0/1), Aidan Roach (2/2), Aaron Younger (0/5), Andrew Ford (2/2), Timothy Putt (1/1), Rhys Howden (2/3), Blake Edwards (1/2). Coach: Elvis Fatovic

Shots:

HUN: 10/26, 38.4%

AUS: 10/27, 37.0%

Extramen:

HUN: 5 for 11

AUS: 7 for 18
Penalties:

HUN: 1 for 1
AUS: none

The first half was surprisingly one-sided as the Hungarian defence worked properly while the Aussie shooters simply couldn’t find their target. After taking the lead, they were simply unable to let a precise shoot go while the Magyars built a massive lead by half-time. It was 5-1 and the most telling stat was the Hungarian goalie’s saving percentage: 1 catch on 2 shots. The Magyars didn’t even need an outstanding performance from Istvan Kardos as the Aussie balls were either blocked or flew all over the place but towards the goal.

Though Hungary was in full control, the first signs that their focus also starts dropping became visible in the last possession of the first half and in the first in the second: both ended up in a man-up and both were wasted with unusual ease. And with these line-up of the Australians, no one could think that the terrible run in offence would stay on the rock-bottom level – in fact when they finally managed to score after 14:30 minutes – and surviving those man-downs which would have pushed them back to 1-6 –, they began to believe again.

Soon came another one for 5-3 but a man-up miss and then a converted penalty from the Hungarians halted their resurrection at 6-3. Though only temporarily as the Magyars’ level in attack fell again, they could not set up real chances, blow one more man-up while at the other end the Aussies could put away two man-ups for 6-5. Still, Bence Batori’s action goal 25 seconds from time served as psychological boost for Hungary before the last period.

That’s gone quickly as Aidan Roach netted a 6 on 5 right from the first possession in the fourth and then had some attacks to go even but they didn’t succeed and with 5:25 to go Adam Nagy’s sneaking shot found the back of the net to reset the two-goal cushion.

But it didn’t last long as the Aussies netted two action goals in 46 seconds, Richard Campbell and Roach were both on target, and more agonisingly for the Magyars between the two they missed a man-up even though they set up Miklos Gor-Nagy on the 2m line but he pulled the ball to the bar. Instead of +2 it was even at 8-8, soon Hungary lost its centre-forward Krisztian Bedo with three fouls, and soon the Aussies were in front with another Campbell blast from a man-up. The equaliser came quickly, though, David Jansik netted a 6 on 4 with 2:38 remaining.

The finish brought enormous battle, the Hungarians managed to kill back-to-back Aussie 6 on 5s but couldn’t escape a third one and Joseph Kayes’s shot found the back of the net (it was the third goal in a row when the ball bounced in from the goalie’s hand). It happened 37 seconds before the end so the Hungarians was under pressure but they stayed calm, earned a man-up and with 2 seconds to go Matyas Pasztor’s bouncing shot hit the top right corner to set up a penalty shootout.

Interestingly enough, it was Pasztor who made a crucial miss in the third round, just seconds after the Hungarian spirits had been lifted as Kardos had caught Aaron Younger’s attempt. Both coaches tried to exchange the goalies, Anthony Hrysantos made a great entry in the second half by delivering some morale-boosting saves in the third period but after two rounds Elvis Fatovis sent Joel Dennerley back and that might have disturbed Pasztor who hit the bar.

After five rounds it stood 4-4, in the first round of the sudden death the second goalie for Hungary David Bisztritsanyi couldn’t have a hand on Campbell’s next shot, Nagy made his one, then Kayes converted against returning goalie Kardos. Batori tried the right side of Dennerley but the Aussie goalie guessed it right, pushed the
ball to the post and that ended the contest and sent the Aussies in the semi-final.

The Hungarians perhaps could recall some crucial moments in this game but also their shocking loss to Canada on the opening day and that goal-no-goal? shot in the dying seconds of their game against Spain – these pushed them to the second position instead of finishing atop and play an easy quarter-final against Kazakhstan.

However, by not fielding their best team here – from this team one or two players might make the World Championships team – they somewhat put the writing on the wall by their own hands.

 Quotes

Tamas Marcz, coach, Hungary:
“We could barely stand the pressure of facing almost twice as much man-downs as the Australians which I didn’t consider rightful provided there was no real difference in the defensive approach between the two sides.

At least that was my impression, while I also have to admit that we missed a couple of chances in the middle of the match where we could have kept more goals from our lead built in the first half. Anyway, I’m still proud of my team as they kept fighting till the end and luck was not on our side this time.”

Elvis Fatovic, coach, Australia

“The first half was a disaster, most probably the worst I’ve ever seen from my team. In the break I told them not
alibis. Of course, we were also aware that the Hungarians had a rather tiring match against Japan as that game

usually dries you out, so we were counting on that they couldn’t cope with our pace that’s why we pushed as

hard as we could in the final period. Even if we could make in the shootout, but our plan worked after all.”

Aaron Younger, captain, Australia:
“It was a good game even if the first half was way too bad. But we need these matches to gain more experience, to feel what it needs to make a come back, to make the right decisions in crucial moments. And now we face another ‘easy task’, a semi-final against Serbia.”

Quarter-final: Japan v Croatia 13-20

Results & Teams

Game 14, 16.45 – Quarter-final: Japan v Croatia 13-20

Quarters: 3-4, 3-6, 2-5, 5-5
Referees: Georgios Stavridis (GRE), Vojin Putnikovic (SRB)

JAPAN
Katsuyuki Tanamura (9/29, 31.0%), Tomoyoshi Fukushima (GK, n. e.) – Kiyomu Date (0/0), Haruki Koppu (0/0), Mitsuaki Shiga (1/1), Takuma Yoshida (1/2), Shogo Kageta (0/0), Yusuke Shimzu (1/2), Mitsuru Takata (1/1), Atsushi Arai (2/4), Yusuke Inaba (5/10), Keigo Okawa (1/6), Kenta Araki (1/1). Coach: Yoji Omoto

CROATIA
Marko Bijac, Ivan Marcelic (GK) – Andrija Basic (0/0), Loren Fatovic (5/7), Luka Loncar (1/2), Maro Jokovic (2/5), Ivan Buljubasic (2/2), Ante Vukicevic (1/3), Andro Buslje (2/3), Lovre Milos (1/4), Ivan Krapic (3/5), Andelo Setka (3/4), Javier Garcia (0/0). Coach: Ivica Tucak

Shots:

JPN: 13/27, 48.1%
CRO: 20/35, 57.1%

Extramena:

JPN: 5 for 13
CRO: 8 for 10
Penalties:

JPN: 1 for 1
CRO: 2 for 2

MVP of the game:

Loren Fatovic (CRO)

Report

Preparing against Japan is never easy as they play a unique style of water polo which caused a couple of upsets in the past – most notably one year ago in this stage they ousted the US team in the World League Super Final arriving to the quarters from the 4th place in their group.

Against the European big boys there is usually one question: how long they can keep the result in balance. If they could stay close or even hold on for a lead long enough that might cause some tensions in the rivals’ camp which would lead further mistakes and more frustration seeing the Japanese striking from the counters.

It happened a couple of times – but not today.

The only turbulence in the Croatian power occurred early in the first period when the Japanese netted three in 2:33 minutes for 3-2 after being 0-2 down but the world champions overcame this minor incident quickly – in 29 seconds they regained the lead.

Loren Fatovic netted a double early in the second to extend the gap to three at 4-7 and even though the two top guns of the Asians, Atsuhi Arai and Yosuke Inaba managed to score a couple of times, the Croats simply outpowered and outplayed the Japan defence and went 6-10 up until halftime.

Fatovic also opened the third with a fine goal and even though their opponents pulled two back, three more Croatian goals in a span of 91 seconds sank their last hopes and they added one more shortly before the break (8-15).

The last period was more like a showdown from the wild west, shooting without loading, it was an entertaining eight minutes with 5 goals apiece, and the Croats tied their own scoring record from Day 1 with 20 goals.

Quotes
Ivica Tucak, coach, Croatia:

“We were a bit afraid before the match of what we could expect from Japan which plays atypical water polo compared to the other teams. But with the exception of 3-4 minutes in the first period we managed to control the match, we were really composed both in front and in defence, stopped their counters so we played as we needed to win easily.”

Yuji Omoto, coach, Japan:

“We tried to do a special defence around the centre-forward but also keep our main weapon, to prepare to
fast today. We expected them building their attacks slower but they did a lot of moves and those forced defensive

errors on our side. We try to improve every year, step by step, watch a lot videos, try to point put what kind of

mistakes we committed and try to learn from them. But it’s really hard to play against the European teams

though we wish to beat them in the future.”
Quarters: 4-1, 4-2, 6-4, 5-3

Referees: Arkadiy Voevodin (RUS), Daniel Flahive (AUS)

SPAIN

Daniel Lopez (3/5, 60.0%), Eduardo Lorrio (4/12, 33.3%) – Alberto Munarriz (3/4), Alvaro Granados (5/6), Miguel De Toro (2/3), Sergi Cabanas (0/0), Marc Larumbe (2/3), Alberto Barroso (4/6), Francisco Fernandez (0/0), Bernat Sanahuja (2/3), Guillem Garcia (0/1), Blai Mallarach (1/2), Alejandro Bustos (0/0). Coach: David Martin

KAZAKHSTAN

Madikhan Makhmetov (2/6, 33.3%), Valeriy Shlemov (4/19, 21.1%) – Yevgeniy Medvedev (1/5), Maxim Zhardan (2/3), Roman Pilpenko (1/4), Miras Aubakirov (0/1), Alexey Shmider (0/0), Murat Shakenov (0/1), Yegor Berbelyuk (0/1), Stanislav Shvedov (0/2), Mikhail Ruday (3/4), Altay Altayev (2/3), Yulian Verdesh (1/2). Coach: Dejan Stanojevic

Shots:

ESP: 19/28, 67.9%
KAZ: 10/26, 38.5%

Extramem:
ESP: 11 for 15
KAZ: 3 for 10

Penalties:

ESP: 3 for 3
KAZ: 1 for 1

MVP of the game:

Alvaro Granados (ESP)

Quotes

David Martin, coach, Spain:

“We just needed to pass this test without injuries and without burning too much of our reserves. This is the fourth match of the fourth day, all players are tired, and the most important games are yet to come, so this was
Game 16, 21.00 – Quarter-final: Canada v Serbia 5-20

Quarters: 2-5, 2-6, 0-4, 1-5

Referees: Adrian Alexandrescu (ROU), Kunihiro Sato (JPN)

CANADA

Milan Radenovic (11/30, 36.7%), Dusan Aleksic (GK, n. e.) – Gaelan Patterson (0/2), Bogdan Djerkovic (0/0), Nicolas Constantin-Bicari (1/9), Matthew Halajian (0/2), Geogios Torakis (0/5), Mark Spooner (0/0), Jeremie Cote (0/1), Aleksa Gardijan (0/0), Arie Soleimanipak (0/2), Jeremie Blanchard (0/0), Reuel D’Souza (4/5). Coach: Pino Porzio

SERBIA

Gojko Pijetlovic (7/11, 63.6%), Branislav Mitrovic (4/5, 80.0%) – Dusan Mandic (3/3), Strahinja Rasovic (2/5), Sava Randjelovic (2/3), Milos Cuk (2/3), Dusko Pijetlovic (2/3), Nemanja Vico (0/1), Milan Aleksic (2/3), Nikola Jaksic (2/5), Filip Filipovic (3/6), Andrija Prlainovic (2/3), Radomir Drasovic (0/2). Coach: Dejan Savic
Shots:

CAN: 5/26, 19.2%
SRB: 20/37, 54.1%

Extramen:

CAN: 1 for 3
SRB: 6 for 8

Penalties:

CAN: 2 for 2
SRB: 2 for 3

MVP of the game:

Dusko Pijetlovic (SRB)
Though Canada began the event with a historical win over Hungary, the time elapsed since showed that it was rather an exceptional day for the North Americans and a bad day for the Magyars. Canada couldn’t repeat that performance against Japan and Spain and now they faced another mission impossible, a game against the Olympic champions. Furthermore, for less experienced young players should find it pretty demanding to play four matches in as many days – which tries even the best European warriors but the obvious signs were visible at the Canadians’ side that their reserves were not as substantial as would have been needed to withstand the pressure a bit longer.

At the end of the day, the three European semi-finalists scored 19-20 goals in their respective quarter-finals which highlighted the difference in players’ qualities and the depths of the teams.

Quotes

Pino Porzio, coach, Canada:
“Against Serbia our team could play without any expectations. We just wanted to do some parts the best possible

but basically for this young team it was rather a good experience to meet the great stars of the sport. Serbia

played with full focus as they need to keep their level before the most important matches and the difference we

saw just shows the real picture.”

Vlado Vujasinovic, assistant coach, Serbia:
In this game our target was to keep our focus as this is the only way to be ready for our semi-final as the match itself did not mean a real test.”

Gergely Csurka, FINA Media Committee

The quarter-final day of the FINA Men’s Water Polo World League Super Final kicked off with a thriller in Belgrade. Australia managed to edge out the Hungarians in a penalty-shootout after a brilliant game, full of twists and turns. In the remaining QFs the Challenge the Europeans campaign didn’t bring any more success for the teams from the other continents, as Croatia, Spain and Serbia all won with big margins to reach the semi-finals.

After an almost perfect first half Hungary blew away its 5-1 lead, and even though they still led 7-5 before the last period, this advantage didn’t last till the end. The Aussie offence improved significantly in the second half – in the first only 2 (!) of their shots were on target – and by netting five goals in the last period they even set themselves up to earn a straight win but the Hungarians could force the shootout with a man-up goal 2 seconds from time.

It was a tremendous fight but the Aussies prevailed as Istvan Kardos (right) could offer one save less than needed - Credits:
In the wheels of fortune the Magyars got advantage with a first save but then a miss levelled the score and finally in the 7th round a fine save from Joel Dennerley sent Australia to the semis.

*It didn't go unnoticed - the new video review rule let the TWPC reveal what happened to Adian Roach and the punishment was handled to Hungarian goalie Istvan Kardos*

Later they received further bad news: after a video review – the new rules enable the officials to act like this – the FINA Technical Water Polo Committee banned Hungarian goalie Istvan Kardos for 3 games because of an act of brutality in the fourth period (an Aussie player had to leave the pool with blood on his face, and the review revealed the reason for that). So Hungary has to play its last two games with one goalkeeper (and field only 12 players).
The Croats were superior in the whole game

The second game was a bit balanced only for a single period, that even saw Japan netting three in a row to turn the game from 0-2 to 3-2. But soon the excitement ceased as the Croats took over and building on their physical superiority they expanded the gap quarter by quarter. Actually, scoring goals against Japan is the best way to prevent their fast counter-attacks and the Croats didn’t spare any as they netted 20 goals, to tie their own record from Day 1.

The third was also a one-sided contest as expected, Spain easily overcame Kazakhstan, won each period with ease, did a fine job in man-up (11 for 15) and their young talented player Alvaro Granados bagged his second MVP award in succession as he netted five goals. Next comes the semis where the Spaniards will face Croatia – both teams have to prepare a really hard test.
Demanding test it was for the Kazaks...

The last game was just like the preceding two as Serbia didn't let the Canadians think of any kind of upset for a single moment. The hosts showed respect towards their opponent by playing with full focus so they also finished the game with 20 goals. Next is Australia, a tougher challenge in the afternoon heat after playing the previous four matches in the evening.

One of the twenty Serbian hits

Schedule for Saturday

(all games were brought forward in order to have room for possible rain delays as the weather remains unpredictable for
15.00 Australia v Serbia

16.45 Croatia v Spain
For places 5-8th
10.00 Hungary v Canada
11.45 Japan v Kazakhstan