

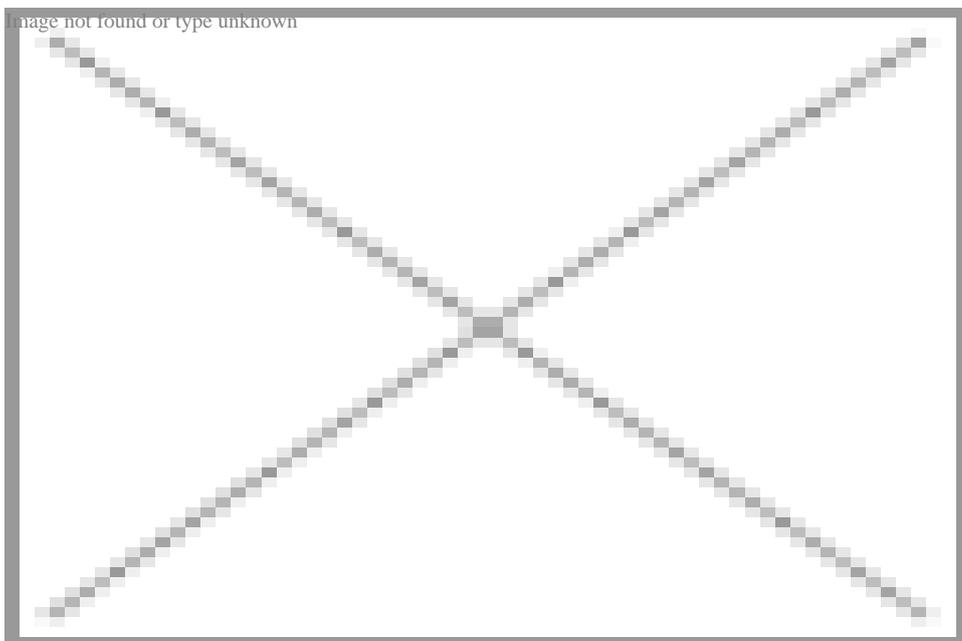
USA Water Polo: potential for a dynasty

By Adrianna Robakowski

There's the potential for a dynasty to be cemented this week in Gwangju. If the women of U.S. water polo team continue their win streak to take home the gold medal they will become the first to win three world titles in a row. They have been dubbed by many as the "Queens of Water Polo," with 11 FINA world titles and five Olympic medals since their silver medal in the Sydney 2000 games.

If you ask head coach Adam Krikorian what makes the team so dominant, he'll say it comes down to a hard working culture.

"This team has never made excuses for themselves and I'm sure they're not going to start now," said Krikorian.



Coach Krikorian

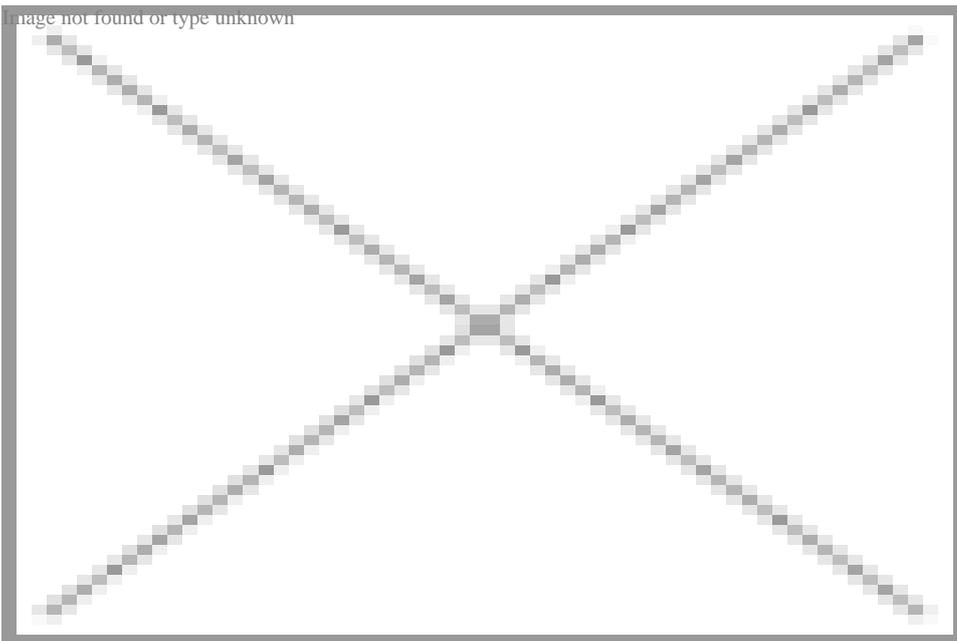
In a 26-1 victory over South Africa to clinch the group A title, the Americans earned their 50th straight victory. This win streak is the longest of any women's team in the modern era of Olympic water polo. Their last loss was in April 2018.

Despite the success, the team isn't spending any time dwelling on the milestone. Instead, they are looking ahead and focusing on the next matchup and the prospect of a third-straight world championship.

“Obviously it’s in the news, we read about it...but when you play elite sports, you’re always trying to win the next game and you’re not protecting something,” said Melissa Seidemann, a center for Team USA. “I think that we do a good job of talking about that, acknowledging those feelings, but making sure that it doesn’t play a factor in our next game.”

Seidemann was a member of the 2016 Rio and 2012 London Olympic gold medal teams and she is the eldest member of the current team, which is home to quite a few newcomers. Along with the rest of the team’s veterans, Seidemann works to keep the nurturing of newcomers a top priority.

“I think what we pride ourselves on as a group is making sure that everyone has a leadership role and everyone feels like they’re contributing. We work day in and day out to make sure that there is no disparity between the veterans and the girls coming in,” said Seidemann.



Captain Maggie Steffens

The U.S. has obviously no trouble winning with their newcomers, who Seidemann believes have played a big role in the success of the team.

“A lot of times, especially in the international game, the players who are as good as the vets but other teams haven’t seen before, they make an incredible impact on games,” said Seidemann. “We always love being a mixed group.”

As they move into the semi-finals, Team USA will have to face their long time rival Australia in order to keep their win-streak alive.

“We’re excited about those opportunities and I think that with the nervousness and anxiousness also comes an extra level of focus that I think only helps us play better,” said Krikorian.
