



**WATER. WONDER.
WELCOME.**



Women's water polo, Day 1: the championship sets off with a fight for prestige

2017.07.16. 07:35 CET

Bronze medallist of the Kazan World Championship and this year's World League silver medallist will open the 17th FINA World Championships women's water polo tournament. Hajós Alfréd Swimming Complex will stage eight matches on Sunday, Hungary will make its debut with a fight against the national team of Japan.

Preparation and tuning are over. From Sunday national teams of various countries of the world will have to prove their strength Hajós Alfréd Swimming Complex - considered as the Wimbledon of water polo.

Expert anticipate this year's World Championships would be the most balanced ones of all times, yet team USA is the highly expected winner of the tournament.

09:30 - [Italy-Canada \(Group A\)](#)

10:50 - [Brazil-China \(Group A\)](#)

This year's opening match is definitely going to provide some excitement for those following the event. Italy has always been dangerous, including their performance at the Kazan World Championship where they finished off third. Canada has surprised us all with its impressive performance in this year's World League Super Final under the leaderships of Theocaris Pavlidis.

These two teams are considered to be the two strongest teams of their group, therefore it might as well happen that the outcome of the opening match will show who will finish off as the winner of Group A.

Obviously, both the Brazilian and the Chinese national teams could influence the final result. The Asian team finished fifth in Kazan. Brazil finished off 10th. It would be a magnificent result for both of them to repeat their previous success.



12:10 - [New-Zealand-Spain \(Group B\)](#)

13:30 - [South Africa-USA \(Group B\)](#)

Team New-Zealand is way more promising than earlier yet we cannot expect them to beat powerhouse Spain right away. The Spanish aim for better placement than in Kazan (7th) and Rio (5th) and their experience in Budapest may come handy in doing so , since they became European champion in 2014 in the same pool.

The fourth match of the day is that of team USA against South Africa. The team of Adam Krikorian holds Olympic and world champion title and they have recently swept the World League as well. The team has been training in Hungary before the World Champs, they finished off first at the tournament in Miskolctapolca ahead of Hungary, Australia and New Zealand, then they trained in Eger with the host team. South Africans, ranked 16th in Kazan, most likely hope to reduce American dominance as much as possible.

17:30 - [Netherlands-France \(Group C\)](#)

Arno Havenga, Dutch head coach said in Budapest that he has always loved playing water polo in Budapest since it is traditionally considered a national sport here. No doubt, the Dutch strive for victory in Hajós Complex in order to bounce back against the Hungarian team for instance, which beat them last year in the European Championships final.

They were rather disappointed when they could not make it to Rio, so the time has come. The French are considered to be an increasingly successful team, head coach Florian Bruzzo was here in Budapest 3 years ago with the men's team, now he puts his hopes in the

women's team - they will start off playing against the Dutch. Let's hope for a nail-biting fight.

18:50 - [Australia-Kazakhstan \(Group D\)](#)

Australian team ranked 4th in Kazan is starting the tournament against an Asian team. Although the team of „kangaroos” has been modified somewhat they hope to exceed their 6th placement at the Olympics. Team Kazakhstan qualified for the World Championships partly because thanks to their Olympic placement China had automatically qualified for the World Champs thus 2 positions were to be filled. Later on in the course of the Asian Championships Kazakhstan's women's team went on to the World Championships.

Team Australia participated the international tournament held in Miskolctapolca, too. They have spent the last couple of days in Szolnok - as they usually do when in Hungary.

20:10 - [Japan-Hungary \(Group C\)](#)

World Championships host team, Hungary is starting off the tournament against team Japan - considered to have a rather unpleasant playing style- with high chances. Attila Bíró and members of the team are dedicated and positive about the match, their first match will provide them a good opportunity to prepare for the meet against the Dutch to be held on Thursday.

Japanese team playing excellently at the Asian Championships is probably aiming at squeezing host team playing in front of huge home crowd.

21:30 - Match of the day: [Russia-Greece \(Group D\)](#)

One of the most nail-biting matches of the day is to be played by the Russian team against the Greek from 9.30 p.m., hence prestige fights open and finish the day. The Russians demonstrating excellent accomplishments as well as major failures in the World League Final have delegated a quite strong team to Budapest and it may also motivate them that Kirishi won the Euro League this year.

The Greek team is definitely considered as a favourite - according to many, including the head coach of team Hungary.

This could be an exciting match for the Greek to bounce back against Russia, since last year they could not qualify for the Rio Olympics in Gouda after being defeated by the Russians (with penalties) in the quarter-final.

Sunday, 16 July:

- W1 9:30: Russia-Canada (Group A)
- W2 10:50: Brazil-China (Group A)
- W3 12:10: New-Zealand-Spain (Group B)
- W4 13:30: South Africa-USA (Group B)
- W6 17:30: Netherlands-France (Group C)
- W7 18:50: Australia-Kazakhstan (Group D)

W5 20:10: Japan-Hungary (Group C)
W8 21:30: Russia-Greece (Group D)