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## WP World Cup (W), Surgut, Day 6: The USA is again golden

Game 21. NZL vs. RSA 14-3 (3-0, 1-0, 5-1, 5-2) 

Results & Teams 

Game 21, 7-8th places final

NZL  vs. RSA  14-3(3-0, 1-0, 5-1, 5-2)

**Referees:** Drury (USA), Florestano (ITA)

**Extra Man:** NZL 2/7, RSA 2/7

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

**Best player of the match:** Jessica Ann Milicich (NZL)

**NEW ZEALAND:** Jessica Ann Milicich, Bernadette Gabrielle Doyle (2), Gabryel Patricia Masina Oloapu,

Alexandra Rose Boyd (1), Emily Charlotte Nicholson (1), Emmerson Joy Houghton (4), Katie Mary McKenty, Grace Elizabeth Hume Tobin (2), Morgan Leigh McDowall (3), Kirsten Patricia Hudson (1), Kate Janelle Enoka.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Daniela Maria Passoni, Kieren-Ashleigh Paley, Emma Nicola McLeod, Georgia Janice

Moir, Hallendorff Amica, Christine Elizabeth Abrahamse, Hanna Gail Muller, Zandre Smit (1), Chloe Meecham, Kelsey White (2).

## Report



New Zealand finished 7th, and South Africa landed on the 8th position, which was quite a predictable outcome of this placement game. The young and inexperienced had no ample arguments against Angela Winstanley Smith's coached side. Like 3 days ago in the group's game, they were always down, inspite of a lot of spade work done by them pretty hard. Shooting percentage turned out in this game to be a decisive factor. Eventual winners were not at all great as well, hitting just every fifth.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

New Zealand jumped into a 3-0 run in the first quarter. All three came in a similar fashion by Emmerson Joy Houghton through the center shots. Coach introduced corrections to her offensive model and rotated roster, while that on the RSA's side had been remained unchanged. South African's would habitually enter the zone as 3 to 3 model, and then would regroup to a 4 to 2. That scheme contained little threats to New Zealand, which made some good use of the flow. Their fast attacks changed one another to make it possible boosting in the gap. A lot of various shots followed: from water, by air, in extra and in contra, to no fruits either with no chance ever seeing the net.

The game progressed to see 6 more nice combinations, completed by "Kiwis" and one – by South African side. The goal of credit was earned rather than performed by Kiseley White as her center cross shot got launched at the middle of the field, 9 - 1. The game was almost done then, at one quarter left in the match-up. The fourth registered 5-2 for "kiwis", who finally sealed the win, 14-3.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

The most beautiful goal of the match-up came by Bernadette Gabrielle Doyle of New Zealand at 10-1. She swam

fast leaving a hungry marker behind her. Once receiving a long pass, she assumed the central position and left no chance for Maria Daniella Passoni in charge of South African "posts".

## Quotes

### **Kelsey White, team South Africa #12, 2 goals:**

We have really improved. New Zealand came out hard today, and they were very accurate. Even though we tried our best, we could not stay competitive all the game's long, and our inexperience got us some big problems. We were learning all this week long. There were a lot of strong teams in the competition, which showed plenty of style and shone bright with a number of beautiful goals. They stuck to innovative tactics. I loved it here in Surgut very much indeed. The swimming pool was amazing, very light and cosy, so was the city and its inhabitants, which were very friendly.

### **Angela Winstanley-Smith, team New Zealand head coach:**

The game was really tough, because we felt a little fatigue. This week we have been playing the world class players, and by the last day of the tournament were not that fresh. We played the 7-8th placement game well, especially in the second half. I am very proud of my girls, which did a lot of learning this week. We are going to take a lot of away with us. We will train hard to be better competitive for the next championships. 7th place is definitely not so bad, as we have not come out at the previous edition of the FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup in 2014, so we are now a kind of a step up. The team is very young and ambitious, there are some 16 year old, and 17 years old players. I think, that their future is really bright.

Game 22. ?HN vs. CAN 20-19 (3-1, 4-3, 3-4, 0-0, penalty shoot-out 10-9)

## Results & Teams

Game 22 for 5-6 places

?HN  vs. CAN  20-19 (3-1, 4-3, 3-4, 0-0, penalty shoot-out 10-9)

**Extra Man:** CHN 3/7, CAN 3/9

**Best player of the match:** Ying Zhai (CHN)

**CHINA:** Lin Peng, Ying Zhai (2+3), Xiaohan Mei (1), Dunhan Xiong (1+1), Xinyan Wang (2+2), Ning Guo (1),

Nong Sanfeng, Jiawen Lu, Wang Huan (1), Panyi Zhang (1+2), Xiao Chen, Jing Zhang (1+2).

**CANADA:** Claire Down wright Krystina Alogbo (1), Axelle Crevier, Emma Louise Wright (3+2), Monika

Catharina Eggens (2+2), Kelly Blair McKee (0+2), Elyse Lemay Lavoie (1), Hayley Ann McKelvey (0+2), Kindred Ayre Paul (1), Shae Chantal Fournier (0+1).

Report





Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

With the consolation 5th place on stake, Canada – China encounter was meant to be fierce and uncompromising. The expectations well proved to see an engaging game. China lead first by a really large margin, then Canadians revived to raise back the question on the eventual win. The denouement needed fire to book a tie after 4 "regulars". The lottery penalty shoot-out moved one up for Chinese as unlucky North Americans finished as low as sixth.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

It all started like a mess as both teams struggled to sort out their game's flow. Asians showcased a full court pressing and this is why Canada was a bit uncomfortable in their attacks. On their part, Chinese did well offensively, netting thrice they have conceded one.

Zhang Panyi dished Wang Xinyuan for the opener in extra, and Canadian women replied back on a couple of counter-attacks followed by a set-pieces from Joel Behkazi, 1-1. Then Zhang Zhing converted their second straight man-up to seal the quarter by the third goal of Guo Ning at the edge of a counter-attack.

In the second, teams traded points. Joel Behkazi got on the scoreboard next, receiving a state-of-the-art assist from Elyse Lavoie Lemay. Mei Xiaochan converted her “contra breakthrough”, choosing the right point to touch the net. Canadians had a 3-3 offense and managed to come up as close as one, 4-3. Emma Wright was again on fire and launched her tomahawk out of the 2nd line. Zhai Ying exchanged goals with power and quick Krystine Alogbo, followed by 2 “doughouts” by Xinyan and Huan Wang, 7-4.

After the break, Asians went on improving and hit their day’s high, 9-4.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Theoharis Pavlidis was looking for solutions and rotated players, which never ceased shooting and creating moments. Persistence fruited as two goals went straight. Joel Behkazi caught Chinese at a loss once they lost concentration, and Krystine Alogbo dished for Emma Wright in a counter attack, 9-6. They never stopped and felt highly afresh. Meanwhile, the difference kept on melting, 10-8 at one quarter left in the competition.

Monika Eggens and Emma Wright did their job right to level the chances, 10-10. A number of hot attacks followed with no success to the either side. Normal time ended to book a shoot-out, where Lin Peng saved one more than her Canadian vis-à-vis Claire Down Wright, 10-9.



## Quotes

### **Xiaohan Mei, team China #3, captain, 1 goal:**

I feel proud of my team. We are very grateful to our coaches. We have done a big thing and finished on a high. For us it was an important step to win and revive psychologically. There still a number of important game in the season ahead of us. Canada is a great team and a great opponent. They were strong today, though they took a slow start. They never gave up and came up very close, as our gap melted in the regular time. This was all about our emotions. The mood to win and winning spirit have played with us a little trick.

Shoot-out is not about luck, it is about training. We normally hit all our penalty shots at practice and were supposed to show our skills in the game.

### **Ge Weiqing, team China assistant coach:**

I liked this tough game very much. Both teams played well. When we lead 5 goals, we got a little relaxed, made a number of mistakes, which was not acceptable playing such a strong team as Canada. In the second half they launched in 3 contra-attacks, and the game got another sort of character. It drew close, very close, and the winner was decided in the shoot-out. Shoot-out is about much pressure on the players, but they stood still. We are very proud of them.

**Theoharis Pavlidis, team Canada head coach:**

We started the game very slowly. At the end of the game we played good defense. We tried to equalize and we did that right. We could have even won the game in the normal time, and the penalty shoot-out was a lottery. Why did we have such a game's flow? Because our players missed concentration and had not enough confidence executing the game's plan. The game's plan was to eliminate the centers and the contra-attack for China. We did not cope with that in the very beginning and they did a lot of damage to us. This is why we got a gap of 5 goals, which were very difficult to play back at such a high level competition.

Game 23. ESP vs. AUS 8-9 (0-2, 4-2, 2-3, 2-2) 

Results & Teams 

Game 23 for 3-4 places

ESP  vs. AUS  8-9 (0-2, 4-2, 2-3,2-2)

**Referees:** Naumov (RUS), Desliers (CAN)

**Extra Man:** ESP 3/6, AUS 6/8

**MVP of the bronze match:** Rowie Webster (AUS)

**SPAIN:** Laura Ester Ramos, Marta Bach Pascual, Anna Espar Llaquet (4), Beatriz Ortiz Munoz, Matilde Ortiz

Reyes, Helena Lloret Gomez (1), Clara Espar Llaquet, Pilar Pena Carrasco, Anna Gual Roviroza (1), Paula Crespi Barriga, Paula Leiton Arrones (1).

**AUSTRALIA:** Lilian Hedges, Keesja Gofers (1), Hannah Buckling (1), Bronte Halligan, Isobel Bishop,

Bronnen Knox (2), Rowie Webster (5), Amy Ridge, Zoe Arancini, Morgan Baxter, Gabriella Palm.

## Report

In the match for bronze, Australia overcome the disappointment of Saturday's semifinal, where they suffered a sensitive defeated to Russia. A new day came also to see them "stingers" eging out the Ref Fury in front of a 1500 strong sellout crowd, and Rowena Webster became the bronze medal's game MVP, scoring half more than her team - 5 goals.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Comparing to the previous edition of the FINA World Cup both teams went one position down. Ex-runner-up Australia were to vie for bronze as bronze-holders Spain could have left in the dust. Both powers were too ambitious and hot and very hungry. The match lived up to all expectations as spectators at the Olymp swimming center of Surgut were happy to witness their fight.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

It was not just a game, but a competition of the best scorers. However, trailing for fully 4 periods, they chose up to solve the matter in the normal time.

Australia netted 2 to start the action. In this way they have booked a lead by the perfect goals, 2-0. One dish was served by Keesja Gofers for her teammate Bronnen, which kicked off the glass. Rowie Webster supported her swinging, and the Spanish response appeared in the 2nd frame.

Anna Espar was left unattended, 1-2, and then there came 5 more beautiful goals. Keesja Gofers, Hannah Buckling, Helena Lloret, Paula Crespi traded points, and the shooting parade was concluded by an equalizer to the gloom by Spain. Anna Espar dished up to center Paula Leiton, which made it 4-4 tie after the first half.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

After the large break, Webster proceeded scoring. In course of 2 periods she hit net 4 times to go. She was backed up by her teammate Bronnen, making good use of the Halligan's pass. Spain's response came along with 2 Annas - Espar and Gual, but they could not jump ahead. Seeing plenty of shots and actions, the game came to the end at 8-9.

## Quotes

### **Laura Ester, team Spain #1:**

It was a very difficult game for both sides. We were unlucky to lose. We tried hard, but our opponents had a better shooting day. They evidently managed to save up more energy during this difficult week. I congratulate our opponents with the win, which was well deserved. On our part, we gave our all to the game, and provided luck was more on our side could have won as well.

**Rowena Webster, team Australia #7, Most valuable player of the bronze medal game:**

It has been such a tough tournament. There were a number of fantastic teams. We came up against Russian in the semi-final. They defeated us, so we knew right away we would have to give our best to the bronze medal game. There were so many spectators. We really wished to show our best game to inspire the next generation of kids doing water polo. We are really happy we have won this and we have ended on the positive note.

Spain was a very difficult opponent to play. They are one of the best teams in the world. They are Olympic medalists, so we knew it would be a break game, and it was tight all the way through and we just managed to get the ball when we could. We played our tactics. We played really good defense. We knew if we keep the tempo down, it would make their life easier. They had 2 power centers, and we did not play full court pressing. We hedged each other and relied on our block. In offense we did pretty well, and I am really proud. Congratulations to my team and our fans.

Game 24. USA vs. RUS 8-5 (2-1, 3-1, 2-1, 1-2)



Results & Teams



Game 24 for the 1-2 places

USA  vs. RUS  8-5 (2-1, 3-1, 2-1, 1-2)

**Referees:** Savinovic (CRO), Severo (ITA)

**Extra Man:** USA 4/6 RUS 2/9

**MVP of the gold medal game:** Margaret Steffens (USA)

**USA:** Ashleigh Johnson, Raney Jordan, Stephanie Halabridis, Rachel Fattal, Paige Hauschild (1), Margaret Steffens (3), Jamie Neushul (2), Kiley Neushul, Aria Fischer (1), Makenzie Fischer (1), Alys Williams.

**RUSSIA:** Maria Bersneva (1), Ekaterina Prokofyeva, Elvina Karimova, Tatiana Zubkova (1), Olga Gorbunova (2), Alena Serzhantova, Anastasia Simanovich, Anna Timofeeva, Evgeniya Soboleva, Evgeniia Ivanova (1), Anna Karnaukh.

Report



The United States of America are the new old winners of the FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup-2018! In front of over 1500 thrilled fans in the Olymp Swimming Center of Surgut, they overpowered Russia, 8-5 to claim their fourth overall and third straight title. Host team tried hard and readily accepted the US gold challenge, but could end no higher than adding second silver to their 1 bronze profile.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

The game turned to be hot and exciting, it was of a physical character with a lot of shots. Defense was the key factor, where Americans were again on top. Russia chose to rely on hedging, helping each other when seeing a sort of threat. Americans' were of a movable nature, which combined zone, pressing and marking in its various forms.

Power center Aria Fischer let the game started "kicking off the glass". Teams exchanged extra-man goals of Tatiana Zubkova and Paige Hauschild to go out for a 2-1 play in favor of the US. Going 2 up in the next period, Adam Krikorian coached side realized a number of other chances. Margaret Steffens in powerplay, center forward Jamie Neushul and light forward Makenzie Fischer were smart enough to find holes in the net. Russians only response came by Evgeniya Ivanova, which converted fast break attack. They could not make use of the gift by Ashleigh Johnson, who was 20 second out of her post, 5-2. Hosts trums had been kept silent later in the third, which got restarted and sealed by the US cap. Another fast break by Maria Bersneva was but a small cheer. They went 4 down and could not revive though. Reigning queens seemed to know everything on their set-up and were but of iron made. They never looked unfresh or tired. Teams traded points, where the USA was always best.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

The fourth period saw Jamie Neushul and Olga Gorbunova exchanging fast breaks to make it a 8-4 game. The latter was on the scoreboard again killing powerplay at 28 seconds left in the competition, which could not change anything in the material point. Her nation earned silver as USA got gold.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

Quotes



**Margaret Steffens, team USA #6, Most valuable player if the gold medal game, Most valuable player of the**

**FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup-2018:**

We are happy to win. We wanted to play Russia this whole time. We got mentally prepared for the battle. No matter of the score we had, we always kept on fighting and they never gave up. I love that about Russia. We had to play all our 11 players to be competitive.

The gold medal game got very exciting. The ball was always moving, there was a lot of pressure, and the tempo of the game was high. A very good experience and a very good exposure for water polo.

I can't remember when we last played Russia in the final, so I believe for them being runners-up makes up a good result. We have met them a lot in the semi-final games, and they came this year to the United States to the series of games before Rio Olympics, which was for the benefit of both teams. We both won medals.

#### **Aleksandr Gaidukov, team Russia head coach:**

There is just one set of gold medals, and in the gold match there is always a winner and a loser. We were unhappy to lose today. We were a little fatigued, missing energy, because there are a number of games here in Surgut, which have been really tough. We played the USA, the strongest team in the world, and we were not really underdogs. They are champions wherever they go, and managed to prove once again their strength.

Our plan for the match was to rely on counter attacks, which we did not do well. We missed speed and smart solutions, which were the only possible strategy against such a team with physically strong sides.

#### **Olga Kamardina, FINA correspondent in Russia**

The United States of America are the new old winners of the FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup-2018! In front of over 1500 thrilled fans in the Olymp swimming center of Surgut, they overpowered Russia by 8-5 to claim their fourth overall and third straight title. The hosts tried hard and were ready to accept the challenge, but could end no higher than adding another silver to their "silver and bronze" profile.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

The 17th edition of the FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup improved Australian tally to 12 pieces on their 5th bronze.

They got on the podium through the consolation final against Spain, and captain Rowie Webster netted an impressive 5, 9-8. World#2 and European #3 trailed all the way up to the buzzer, but could not break up the flow and finished lowly fourth.

Hardworking China and ambitious Canada played out the 5th position in the extended shoot-out, where Asians proved to have a better luck. The 7th placement went down to New Zealand, registering no major faults against South Africa, 14-3.



Photo: Credit to UgraMegaSport

#### **Final placings:**

1. USA
2. Russia
3. Australia
4. Spain
5. China
6. Canada
7. New Zealand
8. South Africa

## Individual awards

**Most valuable player:** Margaret Steffens (USA), **Best scorer:** Anna Espar (ESP), **Best goalkeeper:** Asheligh Johnson (USA)

## Competition results: Day 6, 9 September, 2018 / Finals

Match #21. 15:00 L17 – L18 NZL  vs. RSA  14-3 (3-0, 1-0, 5-1, 5-2)

Match #22. 16:30 W17 – W18 ?HN  vs. CAN  20-19 (3-1, 4-3, 3-4, 0-2, penalty shoot-out 10-9)

Match #23. 18:00 L19 – L20 ESP  vs. AUS  8-9 (0-2, 4-2, 2-3, 2-2)

Match #24. 19:30 W19 – W20 USA  vs. RUS  8-5 (2-1, 3-1, 2-1, 1-2)

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