

### Women's tournament

Final, 19.00

Spain v Russia 13-12

#### Miguel Oca, head coach, Spain

"I don't know how we did it. The girls were fantastic. Even when we were trailing they didn't stop coming on. The Olympics are in the distant future and a whole new tournament. I think we did a regular job in the prelims and got better as the knockout phase started. We prepared 17 players for this tournament but will be allowed only 13 for Tokyo. This is a great weekend for the Spanish sport with three teams in the European finals both water polo teams and the men's handball team. I hope we can finish with 3-0."

#### Clara Espar, player, Spain

"It was crazy. We were playing goal by goal, both teams, until finally in the last quarter we managed to score three goals in a row and pulled away. It was so exciting. This is my first gold, I am so happy, I'm lost for words. It's amazing. The organisation here was excellent, we really enjoyed it. The Olympics are far away. We have to keep working and not take anything for granted. This is a great weekend for Spanish team sports that are not so popular as football. I hope the men's water polo and the handball team will be successful tomorrow too."

#### Andrei Belofastov, assistant coach, Russia

"Coming here our goal was to enter the semi-finals and secure the berth for Tokyo. We did a good job, we are satisfied. Spain was better today. Our man-up was bad – we held well for three quarters then in the fourth quarter we missed some chances and they scored three goals from 6m. Before the championships we would have signed for the finals without hesitation. Now we will change our preparation plan. We have a lot of invitations for joint camps and also there might be some changes to the team."

#### Evgeniya Ivanova, player, Russia

"We are so happy that we booked a ticket to Tokyo. We believed we could do it. At one point maybe we thought we could do a miracle and win but our defence didn't work well today. We should have had more blocks. Still we are very satisfied with the silver medal."

#### Individual award winners

#### Rita Keszthelyi, top scorer, Hungary

"I have never thought of these top scorer awards as something that would make me even more satisfied. Right now, I am happy because we could achieve the bronze medal. We worked hard for it, I am so proud of the girls. I would not have scored that much without their help. I think everyone was

Ligue Européenne  
de Natation

9, rue de la Morâche  
CH 1260 Nyon  
SWITZERLAND

Tel: +41 22 552 99 99  
Fax: +41 22 552 99 89  
lenoffice@len.eu

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exhausted by the end of the game, it is fantastic that we managed to concede only one goal in the last two quarters.”

### **Anna Karnaugh, best goalkeeper, Russia**

„I am very happy for this individual award. This is the first time I get one in my professional career. I want to thank my teammates as they supported me through these European Championships.”

### **Beatriz Ortiz, MVP, Spain**

“I am extremely happy. I really cannot describe how I feel right now. Without the preparation phase before the tournament, without the work we have done day by day and without my teammates and coaches we could not have achieved this gold medal and I would not have been able to show this performance.”

### **Laura Ester, 2019 LEN Award winner, Spain**

“I cannot think about this award right now, because this match and this tournament was just fantastic. I truly would not have achieved this valuable award without my coaches here at the national team and at my club. I always work hard, just like my teammates, and now it paid off.”

### **Bronze medal game, 17.30 Hungary v Netherlands 10-8**

### **Attila Biro, head coach, Hungary**

“It was a very physical game since the Netherlands’ team is extremely strong, all the players are well-trained and huge. We had a rather slow start in the game, but then we geared up and we could keep up with them. It was important that we could stay clear mentally, we played with cool heads. The rhythm of the game changed after the halftime break, our defence was fantastic, and we came back from 5-8 to 10-8, scoring 5 goals without conceding. It was incredible.”

### **Arno Havenga, head coach, Netherlands**

“We started well but in the end we just couldn't score any goals. I think we didn't score for a quarter and a half. That I think was the key to this match. Our man-up was bad, man-down worked OK. Our first week at the European Championships was good, while the second week did not go that well. There were high-quality games, and our opponents played excellently. The Russians were very good two days ago, while the Hungarians performed well in front of the home crowd. It is pity we lost now, but we were beaten by two strong teams. We have to prepare for the Olympic Qualification Tournament, there isn't much time. We have to learn from these games.”

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### **Edina Gangl, goalie, Hungary**

“It still hurts that we lost the semi-final, we could have easily got that Olympic qualification and maybe even win this tournament. But we could not, so we had to move on, and I think we did it pretty well. The atmosphere was unbelievable, so we actually did not have a choice, we went forward, we fought hard and won the bronze medal.”

### **Dagmar Genee, player, Netherlands**

“I think the key of today's game was that we didn't score enough goals. We didn't set up each other with good assists, didn't put enough pressure to score to goal. That made the difference. We have to be more eager to score regardless of who does it. We only have 50 days till Trieste. We must improve and make sure to be more consistent with our game patterns. We must work on the details, especially man-up.”

### **Catharina van der Sloot, player, Netherlands**

„It is hard to say anything right now. We started well but after a while we could not score, and the referees gave us exclusions for nothing. We need to watch these situations back and we need to learn from this. We still have the chance to qualify for Tokyo, but we wanted to secure our place for the Olympics here.”

### **For places 5-6th, 16.00**

#### **Greece v Italy 5-7**

### **Georgios Morfesis, head coach, Greece**

I think today we didn't find the solution for the Italian defence. We didn't shoot well as in the previous matches. We knew in the back of our minds that it is not that important a game but we still wanted to win and close the championships with a victory. I think we did not find the solution for the Italian defence, they blocked our best scorers skilfully so we could not shoot that much today than in the previous games. Now, the only thing on our minds is the Olympic Qualification Tournament which is soon. We will only have 20 day to prepare and we will do our best.

### **Paolo Zizza, head coach, Italy**

“Finally we win against a rival of our level. This is very important for our morals that we finally started putting the pieces of our game together, it's good for our teamwork and chemistry within the team. There isn't much time, the Olympic Qualification Tournament in Trieste is very close.”

### **Alkisti Avramidou, player, Greece**

“We wanted to win today and finish the championships with good result. Defensively, we had a good day, our goalkeeper was amazing. It was in our

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attack that we could not find solutions. I am very disappointed, I expected more both from my team mates and myself.

**Roberta Bianconi, player, Italy**

“The goal today was to start afresh and open a new cycle for Trieste. We needed to boost our moral with a victory. We needed to start again with what was missing from our game, the grit and team play. We really didn't expect to play for the 5th place but in some decisive moments we simply didn't know what to do or lost our self-confidence. In all honesty, we expected to play for medals.”

**For places 7-8th, 16.00  
France v Slovakia 18-8**

**Florian Bruzzo, head coach, France**

“Well, it was the last game and it was difficult to motivate my players after the loss to Greece. We did our job for today and won. 'It was a minimum for us to finish this tournament 7th, but I would not say that I am fully satisfied. There are several fields in which we must improve, we also have to fix many elements in our game if we want to achieve bigger things. This win was important for the Worlds and the Olympic Qualification Tournament. There isn't much time before Trieste and we have to see how we can prepare.”

**Milan Henkrich, head coach, Slovakia**

“This was not the best end of the championships, because we played with many mistakes. I am not satisfied right now. We really wanted to win but France was better today. Our defence did not function well and we could not score enough goals. However, we are very happy we could participate on this tournament after 26 years, we gathered a lot of information from the other teams, learnt a lot from them and I am sure these will be useful for us in the future. Our team is very young and now we have a dream to qualify for the next Olympics in Paris. Many of the Slovakian players will participate in the U17 and U18 world championships this summer and this event was a perfect practice for us. We have to continue working hard. The participation in the Olympic Qualification Tournament will depend on our Federation.”

**Clemence Clerc, player, France**

No, I am and we are not satisfied with this game. Yes, we won but we were not serious in our approach. We made a lot of big mistakes that we simply cannot afford if we want to win against better teams or go up in ranking. In the end we are 7th like in Barcelona 2018. We are not satisfied with that, we expected more. 'Our main goal before these Championships was to qualify for the Olympic Qualification Tournament. It is done. But we wanted to finish within the best six to qualify for the World Championships. All in all, based on our results we finished where we should. The Olympic Qualification Tournament is very close. We have identified our problems here and we will

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work on them. I don't know our plans yet but hopefully we will play some friendly games, we need those.

**Natalia Peckova, player, Slovakia**

“I am not satisfied because we lost today. We are glad we finished in the top 8. It is a big success for us. For the future we have to work on playing under pressure like today. We have to learn to deal with big audiences and big arenas and how to distance ourselves from that.”

*25 January 2020*

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