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Stefan Mitrovic: Hungary is the best place to host the 2017 FINA World Championships

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Olympic, world and European champion water polo player, Serbian Stefan Mitrovic is convinced Hungary really deserves to host the 2017 FINA World Championships

In recent years, Stefan Mitrovic has won almost everything in water polo. The 28-year-old Serbian star clinched the gold medal with his national team at the Rio Olympics, he is also a two-time world champion, three-time European champion, six-time World League winner, World Cup winner and also Euro League winner with his former team, Partizan Beograd. He has been playing in Hungary for three years, he moved from defending champion Szolnok to 21-time Hungarian champion Ferencváros this summer, so the Serbian player is really happy that Hungary is hosting the 2017 FINA World Championships.

'It was the right decision, in Hungary you can always feel that water polo is very important. This sport is getting more and more popular, new pools are being built, the Hungarians have a strong national team and a strong league with 5-6 good teams. These factors will help to achieve some very good results in the long run.'

Mitrovic thinks the Serbs needed a lot of things at the same time to have such a successful national team in the last couple of years.

'We used to have a good team before that as well, but then some experienced players remained with the team, a couple of young players who were hungry for success joined them, and these guys were able to learn everything from the best coaches. When I played at home in Serbia, we had a very strong league which helped us in always doing our best during our career. The situation, however, has changed, the championship has got weaker, so I am not really optimistic about the future. This national team could stay on the top until the Tokyo Olympics, but after that the setback will be inevitable.'

Mitrovic is of the opinion that the 2017 FINA World Championships will be very exciting, so it is almost impossible to say who will be the favourite in the men's water polo tournament in Budapest.

'We have really won everything we could with the Serbian national team, finally we managed to win gold at the Olympics as well, so we will not play under pressure anymore. In Budapest, Hungary will be among the favourites, but the Croatian, the Montenegrin, the Italian, the Greek and even the Spanish teams are also very strong.'

Stefan Mitrovic agrees with those who regard the Alfréd Hajós Complex, the venue of the water polo tournaments at the 2017 FINA World Championships as the 'Mecca of water polo'.