



**WATER. WONDER.
WELCOME.**



Water polo: The Chinese are dreaming of the repeat of the Shanghai miracle

2017.04.11. 09:22 CET

The Chinese women's water polo team has improved a lot in recent years. The women's national team started its international career in the mid 2000's, and after some poor results they finished in 5th place at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Their best result is so far the silver medal at the 2011 FINA World Championships, and they hope they can repeat that success in Budapest in 2017.

China had not been a water polo nation until the 2000's, when they learned that they would be host of the 2008 Olympic Games. Their men's national team was a regular participant at the FINA World Championships, but women's water polo had been an unknown discipline in the country, so they had to start from scratch. The women's team took part in the World Championships in 2005 for the first time, but lost all their matches - just like the 2006 World Cup.

The Beijing Games were round the corner, and the Chinese were afraid they would be ashamed of their results. They finally managed to win a game at the 2007 FINA World - against Puerto Rico...

However, they qualified for the Superfinal of the World League in 2007, and they showed signs of improvement. At the 2008 Olympics they surprisingly beat Russia and Italy, and finished in 5th place, so the fans could be proud of them.

Women's water polo went on to improve after the Beijing Games as well, especially when the Chinese federation signed a contract with Juan Jané, former head coach of the Spanish men's national team which won the 1996 Olympics as well as the 1998 and the 2001 FINA World Championships.

Jané had some excellent results with the Chinese women: Wang Yi, Liu Ping, He Jin and their team mates won the gold medal at the 2010 Asian Games, the bronze medal at the 2010 World Cup, but their major performance came at the 2011 FINA World in Shanghai. They defeated Spain and Russia in the knockout stage, and lost only 9-8 to Greece in the final to win the silver medal.

That was the golden era of the Chinese women's team, but they have had some notable results since then as well. They defended their title at the 2014 Asian Games, and have

finished five times in fourth place in the World League. China has been host of the WL Superfinal since 2011, and that really shows the reputation of this sport in the country.

It is, however, unpredictable how the Chinese will perform at the 2017 FINA World in Budapest. They finished fifth two years ago in Kazan, but they managed to win only one game at the 2016 Olympics, finishing in 7th place.

The Chinese women's national team will play in group A against Italy, Brazil and Canada at the 17th FINA World Championships.

Best results:

World silver medallist (2011, Shanghai)

5th place at the Olympic games (2008, Peking)