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Water polo Champions League: future World Championships to visit the Danube Arena

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Men's Champions League Final Six teams have been announced, now we know who are visiting the main venue of the 17th FINA World Championships this May.

Men's water polo Champions League Final Six between 25 and 27 May will be the first international major event to be hosted by the Danube Arena. Group matches ended on Tuesday therefore the participants as well as the programme of the tournament are known now.

The Italian Pro Recco and the Hungarian champion, Szolnok won within their respective groups earlier so they both made it to the quarterfinals automatically. Serbian Olympic, world and European champion title holder players are coming to Budapest, including Dusko Pijetlovic, Dusan Mandic and Filip Filipovic, athletes visiting the Arena feature bronze medallist in Rio with the Italian team, Stefano Tempesti, Pietro Figlioli, Niccolo Figari and Michael Bodegas, the top player of Montenegro, Aleksandar Ivovic and Croatian Olympic and WCH silver medallist, Sandro Sukno. Except for Ivovic and Tempesti all of them will play in their national teams at the World Champs this summer.

Key players of Szolnok will include the Serbian players, Milan Aleksic and Andrija Prlainovic, as well as Aaron Younger from Australia. It goes without saying that key members of the Hungarian national team, such as Márton Vámos, Dénes Varga and Viktor Nagy will also participate.

Jug Dubrovnik from Croatia and Olympiacos Piraeus from Greece, protagonists of the Champions League finals of last year went on to the Final Six (from the third and second placed respectively) therefore they will have to fight against each other to make it to the top 4. Croatian national team members Marko Bijac, Marko Macan, Loren Fatovic, Luka Loncar, Pavo Markovic, Javier Garcia, as well as Felipe Perrone, MVP of the CL final in Budapest last year, playing in the Brazilian national team and Josip Vrlc contributed greatly to the progression of Jug - this summer we can also watch them playing in Hajós Alfréd Swimming Stadium.

Nine Greek national team members of Olympiacos will play in May, including World Championships bronze medallists in Kazan, Emmanuel Mylonakis, Evangelos-Ioannis Delakas, Konstantinos Genidounias, Ioannis Fountoulis, Kyriakos Pontikeas, Georgios Ntsokas, Konstantinos Mourikis, Christodoulos Kolomvos and Stafnos Galanopoulos, in addition, Andro Buslje and Josip Pavic from Croatia (he has retired from the Croatian national team though) will also visit the WCH in Budapest, as well as Mladan Janovic from Montenegro (not playing in the national squad anymore, either) and the Spanish Albert Espanol.

This summer, spectators will get to see members of ZF-Eger, including Branislav Mitrovic and Milos Cuk from Serbia, Uros Cuckovic from Montenegro, Hosnyánszky Norbert, Decker Ádám, Kovács Gergő, Hárai Balázs, Bedő Krisztián, Erdélyi Balázs from Hungary. The team of Eger will have to fight the Italian Brescia to make it to the final four this May. The Italian team will feature such talents as Marco del Lungo, Christian and Nicholas Presciutti, Alessandro Nora, Sava Randjelovic from Serbia, Petar Muslim from Croatia, and Vjekoslav Paskovic from Montenegro.

To cut a long story short, spectators can expect a really exciting tournament of world class players at the end of May in the Danube Arena. The tournament will make an excellent introduction to the World Championships water polo tournament kicking off on 16 July in Hajós Alfréd National Swimming Stadium.

Champions League, after group matches:

Group A

- 1. Szolnoki Dózsa-Közcég (HUN) 28 points - went on to the quarterfinals of Final Six**
- 2. Olympiacos Pireus (GRK) 22 points**
- 3. AN Brescia (ITA) 17 points**
4. Híd-OSC-Újbuda (HUN) 12 points
5. Spandau 04 (GER) 7 points
6. Olympic Nice (FRA) 0 point

Group B

- 1. Pro Recco (ITA) 30 points - went on to the quarterfinals of Final Six**
- 2. ZF-Eger (HUN) 18 points**
- 3. Jug Dubrovnik (CRO) 17 points**
4. CNA Barceloneta (ESP) 14 points
5. VK Partizan Beograd (SRB) 4 points
6. Waspo Hannover (GER) 3 points

Champions League Final Six programme:

Thursday, 25 May:

Qualification for quarterfinals:

Olympiacos Pireus (GRK)-Jug Dubrovnik (CRO)
ZF-Eger (HUN)-AN Brescia (ITA)

Friday, 26 May:

Qualification for semifinals:

Pro Recco (ITA)-Olympiacos Pireus/Jug Dubrovnik
Szolnoki Dózsa-Közcég-ZF-Eger/AN Brescia

Saturday, 27 May:

For the 3rd place

Final