

## Russia, USA, Argentina and Czech Republic win respective Men's World Championship 2010 semifinals

Rome, Italy, October 8, 2010 – Olympic champions USA will meet Russia in the final for the positions 5-6 after they both won their FIVB Men's World Championship Italy 2010 semifinals in Modena on Friday against Germany and Bulgaria respectively. USA beat Germany 3-0 (25-22, 25-20, 25-23) while Russia made sure that they wouldn't record their worst finish in an FIVB tournament, which stands at seventh, by beating Bulgaria 3-1 (25-20, 26-24, 20-25, 25-23). In the semifinals for positions 9-12, Argentina beat Spain 3-1 (23-25, 25-19, 25-19, 26-24) and the Czech Republic beat France 3-0 (25-21, 25-20, 25-16).

Russia will now play USA at 21:00 (local time) on Saturday in Modena preceded by Bulgaria's match against Germany for positions 7-8 at 17:00. In Florence, Argentina will play the Czech Republic in the playoff for positions 9-10 at 21:00 while Spain will take on France for positions 11-12.

### Semifinals for 5th-8th place in Modena

*Russia beat Bulgaria 3-1 (25-20, 26-24, 20-25, 25-23)*

World No. 2 Russia advanced to the match for fifth place following an impressive victory over world No. 7 Bulgaria thanks to a 10-6 advantage in aces while also edging Bulgaria in blocks 8-6. Both Russia and Bulgaria began the match with their best starting six before Russia recorded their 41st victory against Bulgaria in 51 matches. Towering Dmitriy Muserskiy finished with 19 points for Russia including six aces and three blocks, while Maxim Mikhaylov also contributed 19 tallies with three blocks. Yuri Berezhko added 13. Bulgarians Vladimir Nikolov and Matei Kazyski compiled 21 and 20 points respectively with Nikolov totaling four service winners. "This was a very difficult match for both teams," Russia coach Daniele Bagnoli said. "Determination was the key. The match was very close and in the second set we won with the serves of Muserskiy. In the fourth, Sivozhelez came from the bench and changed our game for good. I am happy with the result and I hope we can play a little bit better in tomorrow's match."

*USA beat Germany 3-0 (25-22, 25-20, 25-23)*

World No. 3 USA literally blocked the way to victory against Germany for their ninth victory in 14 matches against the world No. 11 with an impressive 15-6 advantage in points won at the net. The winners also dominated in service category 4-0. Former tournament top scorer Clayton Stanley and Paul Lotman scored 14 and 12 points respectively for USA and each compiled three blocks. Jochen Schops, who was celebrating his 27th, had a match-high 18 points for Germany while Robert Kromm added 15. Germany, who have finished ninth in three of their last four World Championships (1978, 1994 and 2006, whilst also finishing 12th in 1982) are already guaranteed their best finish at a World Championships since 1974 when they finished fourth. The same applies for USA who have finished 10th and ninth twice in 2006, 2002 and 1998 preceded by a bronze medal in 1994. "We had the target of winning the match," USA captain Reid Priddy said. "It was a good game for our young players like our setter Jonathan Winder and our attacker Paul Lotman. I am very happy we came out with the win." German captain Bjorn Andrae said: "We didn't play clever enough to win and we didn't close the third set when we had a four-point lead. They played very well in blocking and attacking and had the control of the game. It was not our best game."

### Semifinals for 9th-12th place in Florence

*Argentina beat Spain 3-1 (23-25, 25-19, 25-19, 26-24)*

Argentina served up a spectacular four set victory at the Nelson Mandela forum to break a five game losing streak to Spain and advance to the finals of the 9-12 positions as Javier Weber's team was in a tight control throughout the match against Spain and showed a superiority in attack and receiving. Spain lacked a finishing touch and Argentina outclassed for only their fifth win in 12 matches against their European counterparts. Argentina were led by their team's tournament top scorer Facundo Conte's 17 points, followed by Gustavo Scholtis' 13 points. The tournament's top

scorer Spain's Iban Perez was top scorer in the match with 25 points and converted 60 percent of his attacks for points. Eight of Perez's teammates scored at least two points in the match. Argentina gained 29 points on Spain errors and held a 9-5 advantage in blocks. "For us winning tonight was very important," Argentina coach Javier Weber said. "There were many mistakes from both sides and it was not a beautiful win for this reason. The level of the match sometimes was high sometimes low, but for us winning was the most important thing." Spain coach Julio Velasco said: "We were not concentrated enough during the match and that was one of the main problems. Tomorrow it will be a difficult match as well in order to find concentration again. For me it's always difficult playing against Argentina, above all when it's the moment of the national anthems (Velasco is from Argentina). It's the moment of memories for me. I don't like playing against Argentina and Italy for this reason, but this is my job now."

#### *Czech Republic beat France 3-0 (25-21, 25-20, 25-16).*

The Czech Republic reversed their first round five-set loss to France and broke a four game losing streak to France with a convincing straight sets win, their 16th in 26 matches against the world No. 12, to book themselves a playoff for positions 9-10 in Florence. Oliver Kieffer and his teammates weren't in top form and lacked a finishing touch against world No. 36 Czech Republic that consigns les Tricolours to a playoff for positions 11-12, which represents their worst finish since 1982 when they finished 16th. The Czech Republic secured balanced scoring as Peter Platenik and Jan Stokr led with 17 points, while Jiri Popelka added 16 points. France was led by Nicolas Marechal's 12 points. Czech Republic converted 50 of 88 attack attempts for 56.8 percent while holding a dominating 50-29 advantage in attack points. Czech Republic also held a 7-5 edge in blocks. "I asked my players to play well, but our actual situation is not easy," France coach Philippe Blain said. "We had difficulties in attacking the ball and we couldn't win the match. We had difficulties through all of this competition but we try to keep focused for tomorrow."

#### **Positions 1-4 semifinals on Saturday**

Two-times defending champions Brazil will play Italy while 1998 bronze medalists Cuba will take on Serbia in two fascinating semifinals at the Palalottomatica in Rome. It will be a Europe v Americas battle in Saturday's semifinals. Three teams – Brazil, Serbia and Cuba – finished in the top four sides of the 2010 World League. In the first semifinal, Serbia, 1998 silver medalists and ranked fourth in the world, will play world No. 8 and three-time medalists (one silver and two bronze) Cuba. Serbia and Cuba are yet to win the title. Three of the four semifinalists finished in the top five in 2006 with Brazil taking the title while Serbia finished fourth and Italy fifth. Cuba, finished 15th. The first semifinal sees a repeat of the second round encounter which Serbia won 3-1 (16-25, 25-19, 25-22, 25-19) on September 30. It is also a repeat of the bronze medal playoff at the 2010 World League which Serbia also won 3-2 (28-30, 25-20, 22-25, 25-22, 15-12). Serbia in fact have won the last two "finals" against Cuba winning the bronze medal playoff and the 2009 World League semifinal. Overall Serbia leads the head to head matchup with 16 wins from 23 matches including eight of the last 10. Two of the most successful sides in the history of the World Championships and the winners of the last five World titles will meet in the second semifinal in Rome with Brazil having won the last two titles and a silver medal while world No. 5 Italy are three-time champions from 1990-1998 while picking up second place in 1978. It is a dream clash with the undefeated home side against world No. 1 Brazil. Brazil have won the last 11 matches against Italy dating back to the 2003 World League including the 2006 World Championships, 2004 Olympic Games final and the 2004 World League final.

#### **Match Schedule - Oct 9 (Finals & Semifinals)**

Oct. 9 Pool T (Modena) 7-8 Playoff: Bulgaria-Germany 17:00. 5-6 Playoff: Russia-USA 21:00  
Oct. 9 Pool U (Florence) 11-12 Playoff: France-Spain 17:00. 9-10 Playoff: Argentina-Czech Republic 21:00.  
Oct. 9 Pool S (Rome – Semifinals for positions 1-4): Serbia-Cuba 17:00. Italy-Brazil 21:15

#### **Highest Scorers By Day**

Day 1 (1<sup>st</sup> Rd): 28 points by Antonin Rouzier (FRA) in France's 3-2 win over the Czech Republic in Turin  
Day 2 (1<sup>st</sup> Rd): 27 points by Maxim Mikhaylov (RUS) in Russia's 3-1 win over Australia in Modena  
Day 3 (1<sup>st</sup> Rd): 28 points by Fernando Hernandez (CUB) in Cuba's 3-2 win over Brazil in Verona

Day 4 (2<sup>nd</sup> Rd): 24 points by Gyrgy Grozer (GER) in Germany's 3-0 win over Puerto Rico in Catania  
Day 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> Rd): 30 points by Iban Perez (ESP) in Spain's 3-2 win over Russia in Catania  
Day 6 (2<sup>nd</sup> Rd): 23 points by Ahmed Abdelhay (EGY) in Egypt's win against Spain in Catania  
Day 7 (3<sup>rd</sup> Rd): 25 points by Murilo (BRA) in Brazil's win over the Czech Republic in Rome  
Day 8 (3<sup>rd</sup> Rd): 26 points by Ivan Miljkovic (SRB) in Serbia's win over Russia in Florence  
Day 9 (3<sup>rd</sup> Rd): 28 points by Vladimir Nikolov (BUL) in Cuba's win over Bulgaria in Florence  
Day 10 (Semifinals): 26 points by Iban Perez (ESP) in Argentina's win over Spain in Florence

### Highest Set Score

34-32 (EGY v JPN in Pool A) (CUB v BRA in Pool B) Both matches played on September 27.

### Highest Scoring Matches

233 (BUL v CUB in 3<sup>rd</sup> Round) 2-3 (25-22, 23-25, 28-26, 28-30, 11-15) played on October 6 in Florence  
231 (FRA v BUL in 1<sup>st</sup> Round) 3-2 (25-22, 23-25, 25-17, 28-30, 19-17) played on September 26 in Turin  
230 (CUB v BRA in 1<sup>st</sup> Round) 3-2 (34-32, 18-25, 23-25, 25-21, 15-12) played on September 27 in Verona  
228 (JPN v EGY in 1<sup>st</sup> Round) 3-2 (32-34, 23-25, 25-19, 25-17, 15-13) played on September 27 in Milan  
213 (POL v GER in 1<sup>st</sup> Round) 3-2 (25-20, 21-25, 25-22, 22-25, 15-13) played on September 26 in Trieste

### Tournament Top Scorers

152 Iban Perez (ESP)  
143 Vladimir Nikolov (BUL)  
142 Maxim Mikhaylov (RUS)  
141 Clayton Stanley (USA)  
140 Facundo Conte (ARG)

### Birthdays

Jochen Schops (GER) turns 27 on Oct 8  
David Konecny (CZE) turns 28 on Oct 10

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Coming soon

The FIVB Women's World Championship Japan 2010 (October 29 - November 14, 2010)

The FIVB Club World Championships (December 14-21, 2010) in Doha, Qatar

FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships (June 17-26) Rome, Italy