



Competition Day 1 - Tuesday 16 May 2017

CHN v RUS
2-3
(20-25 / 25-16 / 19-25 / 25-23 / 7-15)

For their official return to competition RUS created an upset in the opening game of the 2017 World ParaVolley World Super 6 competition by beating the 2016 Paralympic Silver medallist CHN on their home turf.



The CHN team has been undergoing some changes with among them, the retirement of their top player Sheng Yuhong who is now in charge of the team as head coach.

The first set started with RUS setting the pace and with strong hits from SMIRNOVA (13) followed up by some strong serving. The RUS team established a clear lead at 6-2 and could not be stopped even by some impressive blocks from the CHN team. However the CHN team slowly crept up under the lead of their captain XU JIE (10) with some exemplary defending and hitting at 11-11. RUS started losing a bit of their momentum and were struggling to keep up with the non-stop attacking from the CHN team. Both teams fought point for point but Russia surged ahead with a series of strong serves from BISAEVA (6) followed up by great blocking from PANINA (5) at 22-16. RUS were then too far ahead for CHN but this did not prevent them from fighting and coming back at 24-19. PERMIAKOVA (2) then sealed the first set 25-20 in favour of RUS.

The second set started quite differently from the first with CHN putting the pressure from the first serve and leading 3-1. RUS reacted quickly and matched them point for point but WANG YANAN (7) quick hits destabilised the RUS defence and saw CHN move ahead to the first technical time out at 8-5. RUS got their block back into gear and caught up at 11-11. CHN made some clever use of the block touch and again took a clear lead to the 2nd technical time out at 16-12. WANG YANAN (7) again showed her attacking strength and pushed her team further but PANINA (5) reacted with some strong hitting. At 20-14 in favour of CHN, the RUS team was trying to catch up but several blocks from XU JIE (10) stopped them and the set went to CHN at 25-16 in spite of the Russian coach getting frustrated with his players.



In the third set, and both teams with a set each, the game was up for grab. RUS started strongly and forced CHN to take an early time out at 5-2. This proved to be a good tactical choice and CHN came back at 5 all after a strong hit from XU JIE (10). Russia however kept the advantage and was always ahead by one or two points up to 14-12. Then CHN seemed to have lost the will to play and let the score slide to 18-12 when they suddenly reacted and came back to 20-15

with some clever play by wiping off the ball from the block on several occasions. In spite of some late reaction by CHN captain XU JIE (10), RUS were on a roll and took the set 25-19 by a powerful hit from PANINA (5).

In the fourth set, both teams were neck-and-neck to 7 all and then RUS increased the pace to reach 10-7. However CHN reacted with some strong hits from captain XU JIE (10) and quickly took the lead at 13-12 with some great defensive actions backcourt. SMIRNOVA (13) then served an ace after demolishing the block with a backcourt hit taking the score to 16-15. At the second technical time out, RUS suffered from a lack of communication on court and let points go to allow CHN to reach 19-16. In spite of some late reaction from MEDNIKOVA (3) at the attack and PANINA (5) with another ace, CHN managed to keep the lead at 19-18. Newly appointed coach SHENG YUHONG then took a time out to refocus the team. Both teams reached 21 all but more miscommunication between the RUS players saw the set go in favour of CHN at 25-23 after a tough battle.

In the fifth and final set, RUS started strong and was in the lead by 2 points up to the technical time out at 8-5 in spite of some miscommunication between the players and also helped by the CHN team serving out. RUS increased the pressure on the serve and block and got to a comfortable 13-6, with an ace as a bonus from PANINA (5). The match point was saved once but after a substitution from RUS, they finished the set 15-7 and won the game 3-2.

Best Scorer: (CHN) Xu Jie – 33 points – (RUS) Panina Irina – 20 points

USA v JPN
3-0
(25-19 / 25-12 / 25-14)

The Rio Paralympic Gold medallist started the tournament by setting the tone from the first hit by captain ERICKSON (6) which was followed by another even stronger one and took an early lead at 2-1. Not wanting to be left behind, JPN reacted with a strong windmill serve but could not keep up. USA soon led by 4 points at the first technical time out at 8-4 and kept on outsmarting the JPN block. They followed suit with two aces by BURKLAND (7) at which point JPN asked for a first time out at 11-5. Another quick combination between ERICKSON (6) and KANAHELE-MCCLAY (14) cheated the JPN block and again two more aces by BURKLAND (7) got the USA to the second technical time out at 16-7. USA kept on putting pressure on the serve and were far ahead getting closer to the 25-point mark. However JPN had not given up yet and after substituting HATA (2) for OSADA (12), a series of aces by HATA (2) and SAITO (5) saw them crawl back to 23-15. Confusion and bad calls between the USA players led the JPN team to reach 23-17 still in favour of the USA. A killer ball down the line from EDWARDS (17) followed by a serve out from Japan saw the first set go to USA at 25-19.



The second start started in a better manner for the JPN team with some good scramble to start with, giving them a 3-2 lead. USA was slow to pick up with JPN still leading 5-3 but they eventually found their rhythm again with the first time out in their favour at 6-8.

Some strong hitting again from USA captain ERICKSON (6) puts things back into gear at 12-8. Another ace from KANAHELE-MCCLAY (14) gave another point but JPN KIKUCHI (9) responded with a great hit to reach 13-10 in favour of USA. JPN asked for a time out at 15-10 and KIKUCHI (9) second hand scored a point

straight after. Another kill from ERICKSON (6) led to the second technical time-out at 16-11.

USA increased the pressure and took a 19-12 lead with ERICKSON (6) at the serve. JPN time out did not stop the USA machine with BURKLAND (7) hitting and ERICKSON (6) serving and finishing the set with an ace at 25-12.



JPN did not let the first two sets losses get in their way and kept their head up with a 3-2 lead. Newcomer DOSTY (8) from USA hit convincingly through the outside to lead 4-3.

Again ERICKSON (6) at the serve demolished the JPN receiving line and also the defending line by hitting backcourt to get to the first technical time out at 8-3. Another ace by ERICKSON (6) together with the good job done at the front with the tandem MILLER (10) and BURKLAND (7) saw the USA surge ahead again. Another series of serves by BURKLAND (7), one of which an ace, took the team to the second technical time out at 16-6.

JPN took a time out at 19-7 and a strong hit by NISHIYE (1) saw them reach 20-9. JPN just did not want to give up and added another two points before they substituted OSADA (12) for HATA (2), reaching 23-12. However a bit of a mix up at the next saw USA reaching set and match point, with MILLER (10) finishing the game with an ace at 25-14.

Best scorer: (USA) Erickson – 16 points – (JPN) NISHIYE – 8 points

UKR v NED
3-2
(25-20 / 23-25 / 25-15 / 22-25 / 15-13)

The last game of the day saw a clash between two European teams which have played each other on numerous occasions over the years.

NED started with a 2-0 lead with VAN DER HAAR (5) at the serve. Some strong hitting were happening from both sides but NED still managed to remain in the lead thanks to their strong serving. The first technical time out was in favour of NED at 8-4 and they looked quite comfortable in the lead.

UKR took a time out at 12-8 down to refocus and this seemed to work with PODLIESNA (3) serving to reach 13-10 but was then stopped by the NED block. Some service errors on both sides still maintain a lead from NED at 15-12.

A great defence from PODLIESNA (3) followed by a strong serve from captain BEZPROZVANNA (7) allowed UKR to get closer to NED at 14-15. The first technical time out ended up in favour of UK at 16-15 and they took the lead for the first time in the set. Both teams fought point for point at 19 all but UKR managed to move forward and win the set 25-20.



At the start of the second set, UKR resumed as they finished, with a strong ace serve followed by a block to take a 2-0 lead. Some errors saw NED come back and lead 3-2. A fantastic save by VAN DER HAAR (5) took the team to a 6-4 lead followed by serving errors from UKR at 7-4.

The first technical time out was at 8-5 in favour of NED. More consistency in the play then saw NED reach 10-8 but UKR stepped up to then serve an ace at 10-

11. A few mistakes saw NED come back to the score and reach the second technical time out at 16-14.

NED still kept ahead at 20-18 but struggled to do so. UKR asked for a time out at 23-20 and PODLIESNA took this opportunity to place a strong hit and come back at 23-22. A net touch from NED sees the two teams level up 23-23 but after a substitution with BRANDSMA (6) out for VAN MARUM (3), NED eventually took the second set 25-23.

In the third set, NED started strongly with a powerful hit from captain STINISSEN (1) combined with strong serving from VAN DAM (10) to take a 2-0 lead.

UKR then stepped up their game and started piling on the point to reach the first technical time out at 8-3. A series of errors on the NED side saw UKR take a 9-point lead at 14 -5 and then reduce it to 6 to 18-12. NED woke up too little too late with some strong serving and blocking however UKR had already reached 22-14. A UKR substitution at 23-15 then gave them the set point followed by a time out from NED, which did not stop UKR from taking the third set 25-15.



Two unforced errors and an ace by BEZPROZVANNA (7) saw UKR take an early lead at 3-0 but NED quickly caught up at 3-2 to then surge ahead at 7-5. UKR took a time out to slow things down and then made effective use of their backcourt player BEZPROZVANNA (7) to level the score to 7-8. NED picked up again after some good blocking and defence to 14-12. They still managed to stay ahead at the second technical time out at 16-13.

However UKR did not give up and fought to reduce the point deficit by 1 at 18-19. At 22-20 in favour of NED, UKR took another time out in order to give the team some time to breathe. In spite of this NED took the 4th set 25-22.

In the decisive set, NED lost the serve following a strong hit from PODLIESNA (3) but regained the lead with a series of effective blocks to 3-1. Then UKR found some momentum and took a 5-3 lead thanks to strong serves from PODLIESNA (3) again. NED requested a time out but this did not help levelling the score; as a result, UKR reached the first technical time out leading 8-5. At 11-8 in favour of UKR, they still requested a time out to slow down the progress of NED coming back fighting.

At 11-11 and with a yellow card due to time wasting for UKR, NED took their chance but a strong hit from BEZPROZVANNA (7) momentarily stopped them. They then managed to regain composure and take a 13-12 lead. However this was short lived as UKR served an ace and reached 14-13 ready to take on the set, which they did at 15-13 hence winning the game 3-2.

Best scorer: (UKR) – BEZPROZVANNA (30 points) – (NED) – STINISSEN (13 points)