



International handball
Federation
(IHF)



The VIIIth Womens' World Handball Championships in Hungary

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It is not far from Los Angeles to Budapest. Photographs of the host city for the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad were spread before the eyes of all those taking part in the VIIIth Womens' World Handball Championships. This image was conjured up because every team obtaining one of the first three places at the last world championships to date (that organized in 1982 at 'Budapest) automatically qualifies for the Handball finals at the Olympic Games. The three teams which eventually qualified were those from the USSR, Hungary and Yugoslavia, during a tournament held from 2nd to 12th December 1982.

Here under the next four headings are the main facts and characteristics of these events :

1. Hungary proved to be an excellent host country. Many new sports installations were

built for these championships, in particular, the biggest of them all, the Budapest Sports Centre, where the World Handball Championships took place before a crowd of 10,500 spectators, and where the most important matches were played. But the World Championships itself involved all countries. Handball "fanatics" were able to watch the progress of the best teams from five continents, in eleven different towns. It was a great success; the total attendance figure was between 80,000 and 85,000. The most satisfied spectators were, without doubt, those who were in the Budapest Sports Centre on the last day of the competitions.

2. A dozen teams took part in the VIIIth Womens' World Handball Championships, namely : the host country, Hungary, the medal winning teams at the Moscow Games - the

Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, and Yugoslavia, and the eight teams which had won the "B" group qualifying matches - Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and Romania, for Europe - the Congo, for Africa - South Korea, for Asia-and the team from the United States, for America. The preliminary events did not excite a great deal of interest, since they were only qualifying rounds for the final pool of six. This pool, known as the "Grande Finale" brought together the teams from the USSR, Yugoslavia: Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and South Korea. The "Petite Finale" was played between Romania, the Federal Republics of Germany, Norway, Bulgaria, the United States and the Congo. One of the most closely fought matches was that between the USSR and South Korea. At half time, the score was 10 all ; the final result was 23 to 21 in favour of the Soviet team.

Interest mounted as the final events drew near. There was one very critical moment for the Hungarians. Having beaten South Korea and Czechoslovakia, they drew against the German Democratic Republic and lost against the Yugoslav team. Their place amongst the first three was therefore far from certain. Everything depended on the last day and the last match, which the Hungarians had to play against the Soviets. The public was highly motivated ; the spectators banded together to support their favourites and the Hungarians were egged on to victory by 15 to 13. The final result, therefore, was: the team from the Soviet Union in first place, the Hungarians in second place and the Yugoslavs in third. The surprise result came from the Federal Republic of Germany. In only fourth place, this team did not qualify for Los Angeles.

3. The teams taking part in what is called the "Petite Finale" were also engaged in some memorable battles. An "avalanche" of goals was not uncommon ; the West Germans found their way 27 times into their opponents nets ; the Americans, 14 times. The Congolese players, representing Africa, put up a very passive performance, which was reflected in the difference in their goal scores : 74 for, 145 against.

4. What changes can be seen since the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad at Moscow ? The International Handball Federation, under its President Paul Hogberg (SWE) has increased its powers to deal ruthlessly with brutality in the game during matches. Fortunately, it was not necessary to effect these measures during the VIIIth Womens' World

Handball Championships. We certainly did not witness any attacks of brutality. However it is true to say that in Womens' Handball there is more emphasis on proper preparation and tactics rather than "physical" domination. We were present at many stages of the game, all of which were full of technical prowess and fair playing, where both the attackers and the defenders on rival teams carried on prolonged battles without breaking any rules. Another important change is the dropping of defensive playing. The best shooters in the opposing team jumped up to shoot from the middle of a solid wall of defence players. It became quite exceptional to see nothing happening in the centre of the field. This territory was once considered to be a "no man's land" ; now, the situation is changing. Acrobatic ability plays an important role in today's matches, and tactical imagination is distinctly more developed than before.

After these VIIIth Womens' World Championships, one can safely say that the game of Handball is now on the right track, especially in view of the ability of the three teams for the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad at Los Angeles. There is every reason to believe that the battles to follow for the remaining qualifications for Los Angeles will leave no place for brutality and will aim for even greater improvement in the quality of the game.

Results of the VIIIth Women's World Handball Championships

1. URS	5 4 0 1	86- 81	8
2. HUN	5 3 1 1	99- 89	7
3. YUG	5 3 1 1	102-95	7
4. RDA	5 2 2 1	99- 89	6
5. TCH	5 1 0 4	83- 98	2
6. KOR	5 0 0 5	112-129	0
7. NOR	5 4 1 0	109- 77	9
8. ROM	5 3 2 0	122-80	8
9. FRG	5 3 1 1	110- 75	7
10. BUL	5 2 0 3	101- 93	4
11. USA	5 1 0 4	76-122	2
12. CGO	5 0 0 5	74-145	0

Best goalkeeper : Smedsgard (NOR). Best shooter: Merdan (YUG) : 52 goals. Best player : Karlova (URS). Ideal team, judging by the performances at the VIIIth World Championship : Ptuiiec (YUG), Anastasovski (YUG), Godor (HUN), Bjung Sun Juan (KOR), Angyal (HUN), Merdan (YUG), Cigankova (URS).

M. K.