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VOLLEYBALL
WORLD GRAND PRIX FINALS
SAPPORO 2013

World Grand Prix previews - Finals (28 August – 1 September)

General

- This is the 21st edition of the World Grand Prix. China will participate in the Finals for a record 20th season. The only time they missed out on the Finals was in 1997. Brazil are on 19 Finals appearances, Japan 12, Italy 11, the United States 10 and Serbia 2 (including 2013).
- Three of the six teams that have qualified for the 2013 World Grand Prix finals have won the title before: Brazil (8 times), the USA (5) and China (1). Italy, Japan and Serbia are seeking their first World Grand Prix championship.
- Japan is the only country out of the six finalists to have never made the World Grand Prix podium.
- The six finalists in 2013 all made the 2011 finals as well. In that year, eight teams qualified for the Finals (including Thailand and Russia).
- This is the fourth consecutive year that the USA, Brazil and China have all reached the World Grand Prix Finals.
- If either Brazil or the USA win this year's tournament, it will be the ninth time in the last 10 years that one of them have won the title.
- Brazil have won 197 matches in World Grand Prix play and can become the first country to reach 200 wins during this year's Finals.
- Japan have hosted the Finals four times before. This is the first time Sapporo is the host city, after Kobe (1997), Sendai (2005), Yokohama (2008) and Tokyo (2009).
- The host nation has never won the World Grand Prix title. The last organising country to win a medal was China in 2007 (silver).
- Serbia, the United States and Brazil have a positive win-loss record in the World Grand Prix Finals play: Serbia 4-1 (80%), USA 29-10 (74.4%), Brazil 49-20 (71%).
- Japan have the worst win-loss record of all 2013 Finals competitors: 8-33 (19.5%). Italy 16-25 (39%), China 29-43 (40.3%).

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Day 1 (Wednesday 28 August)

SERBIA v CHINA

Serbia

- Serbia have reached the Finals by finishing third in the preliminary round ranking with a 7-2 win-loss record. Their only two defeats were a 3-2 defeat against United States and another 5-set loss against China.
- This will be Serbia's second Finals participation. In 2011 they finished third, beating Russia 3-0 in the bronze medal match.
- In 2011 Serbia became the first nation ever with a top-3 classification in their debut season (inaugural season 1993 not taken into account).
- Serbia have lost only one of their five Finals matches. In 2011 United States proved too strong in the semifinals (3-0 defeat).
- Milena Rasic finished the preliminary round as best blocker in absolute numbers (33 stuffs).

China

- China have qualified for the 2013 World Grand Prix Finals by finishing on top of the preliminary round table.
- China are the only unbeaten team left in the competition, recording nine wins (5 in straight sets) in the first three weeks.
- China have lost only six sets in this season's World Grand Prix, the fewest of all teams.
- For the first time in 21 World Grand Prix participations China remained unbeaten in the preliminary round. Brazil (5x), Cuba (2x) and USA (1x) are the only other countries that have ever finished the preliminary round without a single defeat.
- Last season the United States won the World Grand Prix after finishing the preliminary round without a single loss.
- China will participate in the Finals of the World Grand Prix for a record 20th season. The only time they missed out on the Finals was in 1997. Brazil are ranked second with 19 Finals participations (including 2013).
- China recorded their only World Grand Prix tournament win in 2003. They finished second in 2001, 2002 and 2007. China are one of six countries to have won the title.
- China have finished in the top-5 in all World Grand Prix editions except 2011 (eighth).

Head to Head

- Serbia and China have clashed three times before in the World Grand Prix. Serbia have won twice. China once.
- In this year's preliminary round China beat Serbia in five sets. As a result China have now beaten all opponents they have ever played in World Grand Prix competition.
- In 2011 these teams met twice, with Serbia claiming victory on both occasions. In the preliminary round they won 3-1. In the Finals Serbia recorded a 5-set victory.
- Serbia and China have never played each other outside China (in World Grand Prix).
- Serbia are ranked ninth on the FIVB world ranking. China are on fifth place.



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BRAZIL v USA

Brazil

- Olympic champions Brazil have qualified for the Finals for the 10th consecutive season.
- The only time Brazil failed to reach the Finals was in 2003. They did not take part in the 1997 World Grand Prix.
- The last three times the Finals was held in Japan (2009, 2008, 2005), Brazil have lifted the World Grand Prix trophy.
- Brazil have won eight of the 20 World Grand Prix titles and have finished on the podium in 15 of the 19 editions in which they have taken part.
- Brazil have finished second in the last three World Grand Prix editions and can become the second country to win silver in four consecutive seasons. Cuba were runners-up in 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997.
- With 197 victories in World Grand Prix play, Brazil are the most successful nation in the history of the tournament. China are next with 163 victories.

USA

- This will be United States' 10th Finals participation. They have won the World Grand Prix five times: 1995, 2001, 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- The triple defending champions can become the first country to win the World Grand Prix in four consecutive years. The USA currently share the record of three straight titles with Brazil (2004, 2005, 2006).
- Since the 2010 season, the USA have won 46 of their last 51 World Grand Prix matches.
- Last season the United States won the World Grand Prix after finishing the preliminary round without a single loss. This year they reached the Finals by finishing fourth in the preliminary round ranking with a 8-1 win-loss record.
- The USA have lost only one of their last 25 World Grand Prix matches. Their only defeat since the 2011 semifinals was recorded last August, when opponents Brazil won 3-1 in the preliminary round.
- Kelly Murphy is the second best spiker in this year's World Grand Prix with a 45% success rate.

Head to Head

- Brazil and the United States have faced each other 18 times before at the World Grand Prix. The USA have won eight and Brazil 10 meetings.
- The USA are ranked first on the FIVB world ranking. Brazil are second.
- The USA and Brazil have already played in this year's World Grand Prix, with Brazil winning 3-1 in the first week of the preliminary round.
- Brazil have come first or second in each of the last five World Grand Prix editions, but have finished runners-up to the United States in each of the last three editions.
- Four of Brazil's last five World Grand Prix defeats have been at the hands of the USA.
- At London 2012, Brazil successfully defended their gold medal from Beijing 2008, beating the United States 3-1 in the final.

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- Brazil are unbeaten in the last two competitive matches against the United States (3-1 win in the 2012 Olympic Games final and 3-1 win in the 2013 World Grand Prix preliminary round).

JAPAN v ITALY

Japan

- Japan have reached the Finals for the 12th time in World Grand Prix history. They qualified for this year's Finals as the host nation.
- Japan have hosted the World Grand Prix Finals four times before, after Tokyo in 2009, Yokohama in 2008, Sendai in 2005 and Kobe in 1997.
- Japan return to the Finals after a one-year absence. They have qualified for the Finals in five of the last six World Grand Prix editions.
- Japan have participated in every World Grand Prix edition (21) but have never been on the podium. They finished fourth on two occasions, most recently in 1997.
- Japan have suffered most defeats of all countries in World Grand Prix history: 142. Korea, who were not competing in 2013, are the only other team with more than 100 defeats (103).
- Japan are the only country to have lost over 400 sets in World Grand Prix play (489). China are next with 380 sets lost.
- Japan have lost only two of their nine preliminary round matches of this year's World Grand Prix campaign, their second best preliminary round performance. In 1994 they recorded eight wins in nine matches.
- Risa Shinnabe is the best spiker in this year's World Grand Prix preliminary round with a 45.19% success rate.

Italy

- Italy progressed to the Finals by finishing fifth in the preliminary round with a 7-2 win-loss record. Their only two losses were a 3-1 defeat against Russia and a 5-set loss against the Dominican Republic.
- Italy are appearing for the 11th time in the World Grand Prix Finals. The only European country with more appearances is Russia (13).
- Italy's best result in the World Grand Prix is a silver medal in both 2004 and 2005.
- Italy missed the Finals last year, finishing 10th: their worst World Grand Prix finish.
- Italy are reigning World Cup champions.
- They have won four tournaments in Japan: the 2000 Olympic qualification tournament, the 2007 World Cup, the 2009 World Grand Champions Cup and the 2011 World Cup.

Head to Head

- This will be the 16th meeting between Japan and Italy in the World Grand Prix. Italy have won nine and Japan six of the previous 15 matches.
- Japan have lost only one of their last five World Grand Prix matches against Italy (3-1 defeat in 2010 preliminary round).

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- Three of Italy's last four wins over Japan in the World Grand Prix were in straight sets.
- At the 2012 Olympic Games, Italy beat Japan 3-1 in the preliminary round.
- Japan and Italy are ranked third and fourth respectively on the FIVB world ranking.