



## FIVB WORLD LEAGUE PREVIEWS – 28-30 JUNE 2013

### POOL A

#### BRAZIL v FRANCE

##### **Brazil**

- > Brazil and Bulgaria are the only two unbeaten teams left in this year's World League: four wins from four matches.
- > Brazil are two wins away of becoming the first team to reach 300 wins in the World League.
- > Brazil (and Bulgaria) have lost only three sets so far this season, fewest of all teams.
- > Brazil (and Bulgaria) have a set win-loss ratio of 4.0, highest in this year's World League.
- > In 2011, Brazil won their first five matches of the World League season. They won their first seven matches in 2009.

##### **France**

- > France's best result in 17 previous World League editions was finishing runners up in 2006, losing the final against Brazil.
- > That 2006 final was the penultimate time France gave away a two-set lead (2-3). They also did this against Serbia in 2008.
- > France (and Poland, Serbia) have played three five-set matches in a row. They have never had to play four consecutive five-set matches.
- > The last team to play four consecutive five-set matches was Russia in 2011-2012.
- > France have won five of their last seven five-set matches. Brazil have lost five of their last seven five-set matches.

##### **Head-to-Head**

- > Brazil and France have faced each other 18 times before, with Brazil winning 15 matches.
- > There was an 18-year-gap between France's first two wins (1990) against Brazil and their last win (2008) against them.
- > Brazil can clinch their fourth straight-sets win in a row against France. Brazil last managed to win four matches in a row against a specific opponent in 2011, when they achieved this against Puerto Rico (4).
- > The last time France failed to win a set in four consecutive matches against a specific team was against Bulgaria (4), in 2004-2005.
- > Mario da Silva Pedreira Junior (BRA, 3.20) and Jenia Grebennikov (FRA, 2.35) lead all players with most digs per set this season.



## **POLAND v ARGENTINA**

### **Poland**

- > Defending champions Poland have started their 2013 World League campaign with two home losses against Brazil and two defeats at France.
- > The last time Poland started a World League campaign with four consecutive defeats was in 1999. They have never lost their first five matches.
- > Poland are the first defending champions to start their following World League campaign with four successive defeats.
- > This World League campaign, Poland have already lost 12 sets in four matches. They lost 13 sets in all their 12 intercontinental round matches of their 2012 winning season.
- > Poland's last World League home win was recorded more than one year ago. On 3 June 2012, they beat Brazil 3-2 in Katowice.

### **Argentina**

- > Argentina are winless in their last five World League matches and can lose six/seven consecutive matches for the first time since they lost 17 matches in a row from 2009 until 2011.
- > Argentina have lost five of their first six matches this World League campaign. Only in 2007 and 2010 they recorded more defeats in their opening six matches (15 appearances total).
- > Argentina have never made the podium in the World League, but have finished in the top five in three of the last four years, including a best result of fourth in 2011.

### **Head-to-Head**

- > Argentina and Poland have met 18 times in the World League. Argentina have won only on two occasions. The teams have not clashed since 2011, when Poland won 3-0 in the bronze medal match in Gdansk.
- > Poland are unbeaten in their last 16 World League matches against Argentina. The last time they failed to beat the South American country was almost 11 years ago. On 7 June 2002 Argentina won 3-0 in San Juan.
- > On home soil, Poland have a perfect record against Argentina in the World League: 10 wins from 10 matches, losing only eight sets.
- > Poland have won 16 matches against Argentina, making the South American country their most favourite opponents in the World League. Next are Japan, with 11 wins.
- > At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Poland and Argentina met in the first round group stage. Poland won 3-0 (25-18, 25-20, 25-16). Both teams qualified for the knock-out stages.



## **UNITED STATES v BULGARIA**

### **United States**

- > United States have won 116 World League matches to date, ranked eighth in World League history. They could become equal-seventh if they beat Bulgaria twice AND Poland lose both matches against Argentina.
- > United States are unbeaten in their last three World League home matches. They can win four consecutive home matches in one single season for the first time since 2008. That season, United States only lost one match on home soil: 3-2 against opponents Bulgaria.
- > Matthew Anderson is the best receiver in the World League this season. He has an efficiency rate of 83.17%. Second-most efficient is France's Jenia Grebennikov with 69.49%.

### **Bulgaria**

- > There are two unbeaten teams left in this year's World League and both come out of Pool B: Brazil and Bulgaria.
- > Bulgaria have won their first four World League matches in 2013. This is their longest winning streak since 2007, when they won their first eight.
- > Their winning streak of four matches is the longest of all current World League teams, alongside Brazil.
- > Todor Aleksiev is the best spiker in this year's World League. He has a 56.98 success rate.

### **Head-to-Head**

- > United States and Bulgaria have played each other nine times in the World League. USA have won twice, compared to seven Bulgarian victories.
- > In all nine mutual matches, Bulgaria have either claimed three sets (7 times) or none (twice).
- > United States have won the last mutual encounter, and could claim successive wins against Bulgaria for the first time in their World League history.



## **POOL B**

### **ITALY v IRAN**

#### **Italy**

- > Last week, Italy's unbeaten run came to an end after five matches, when Russia proved too strong in Surgut: 3-2.
- > In this year's World League, Italy have won three of their six matches in straight sets. This is the most of all teams, alongside Canada, who won three of their six Pool C matches without dropping a set.
- > Italy have played 70 matches against Asian opposition in the World League, winning 63 and losing only seven. They have lost only one of their last 14 World League clashes with teams from Asia.
- > Ivan Zaytsev is the best scorer in the World League this season, with a total of 130 points.

#### **Iran**

- > Last week, Iran became the first team to win a match in their World League debut season since Czech Republic in 2003. Iran secured their first ever World League win at home against Serbia: 3-2.
- > In their first four World League matches Iran claimed 0 sets, 1 set, 2 sets and 3 sets in exact order.
- > Libero Farhad Zarif Ahangaran (1m65) is the shortest of all players of all the 2013 World League squads.
- > Iran head coach Julio Velasco (ARG) was in charge of opponents Italy from 1989 till 1996. Under his leadership, Italy won the World League in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994 and 1995.

#### **Head-to-Head**

- > Italy and Iran have never met before in the World League.
- > The last time the two nations clashed at an international tournament (Olympic Games, World Championships, World Cup) was in 2011 at the World Cup in Japan, when Italy beat Iran 3-1.
- > In 2010, Iran and Italy met in the first round group stage of the World Championships. Italy won 3-2.
- > This fixture features the teams with the two best blockers in this year's World League: Emanuele Birarelli (Italy) with 1.04 per set and Seyed Mohammed Mousavi Eraghi (Iran) with 1.12 per set.



## **CUBA v RUSSIA**

### **Cuba**

- > Cuba have lost their first six matches of a World League campaign for the first time in their 23 appearances.
- > The longest losing streak Cuba have ever suffered in the World League is seven matches, in 2003 and 2004. With two losses against Russia, Cuba will break their negative record.
- > Cuba have not yet managed to win more than one set in a World League match this year.

### **Russia**

- > After starting off with six home matches, Russia will face their first two away encounters.
- > After winning their first four matches in this year's campaign, Russia lost the first match in the doubleheader against Italy.
- > Nikolay Pavlov has made the most serve attempts in the World League this season: 117.
- > Andrey Ashchev has made the most block attempts of all players in the World League this year: 118. However, his 72 faults are a league-high in 2013.

### **Head-to-Head**

- > Cuba and Russia will play each other for the 42nd and 43rd time. This is the most contested matchup in World League history. Cuba have 16 wins, Russia 25.
- > Cuba (209) and Russia (219) are two of four teams with more than 200 World League wins. The other two are Brazil (298) and Italy (257).
- > Russia have won 22 of their last 29 World League matches against Cuba. Cuba have won three of the last four.
- > Cuba and Russia also played each other in the 2012 intercontinental round. Cuba won three matches, Russia one.



## **SERBIA v GERMANY**

### **Serbia**

- > Serbia started their 2013 campaign with three wins and three losses. As an independent country (since 2007), they have always won at least three of their first six matches, except for 2008, when they won two of the first six.
- > If Serbia lose twice against Germany, they will have a negative balance after eight matches (3 wins, 5 losses). This happened only in 2008 (also 3 wins in 8).
- > Serbia are currently the only country in the World League with more than 25 matches won and fewer than 100 matches played: 55 wins in 90 matches.
- > Aleksandar Atanasijevic is the World League's second-best scorer in 2013 with 111 total points. Only Italy's Ivan Zaytsev has scored more (130).
- > Atanasijevic also has the most spike attempts in 2013: 213. Portugal's Vadir Sequeira (201) is the only other player with more than 200.

### **Germany**

- > Last weekend, Germany recorded their first World League wins over Cuba in 11 years.
- > Germany have won a total of 196 sets in World League history (276 lost). They can reach 200 by claiming four sets off Serbia.
- > Setter Lukas Kampa is the player with the most sets without a single fault this year. Kampa has 107.

### **Head-to-Head**

- > Serbia will play Germany for the first time in the World League as an independent country. The Germans also have never met Serbia and Montenegro at this stage.
- > Serbia are Germany's 15th opponent in World League history. Germany are Serbia's 17th opponent as an independent country in World League history.
- > Independent Serbia have 10 more wins than Germany in the World League (55 to 45), despite playing way fewer matches (122 to 90).



## **POOL C**

### **FINLAND v CANADA**

#### **Finland**

- > Finland can claim their fourth win of this year's World League campaign. Last year they had three in total.
- > Finland have lost their last two matches by a 3-1 score-line. The last time they posted three identical results (win or lose) in a row was in 2008, losing 3-1 three times in a row against Spain, USA, USA.
- > Mikko Esko has an average of 10.08 setups per set. Only Korea's Han Sun-Soo has a higher average (10.73).
- > Finland are 13-11 in five-set matches. They have won one and lost one in this edition.

#### **Canada**

- > Canada has clinched three straight wins this edition, equal most with Italy.
- > Canada can record three 3-0 wins in a row for the first time in their World League history.
- > Canada, Japan, Argentina and Cuba have not yet played a five-set match this year.
- > Canada have won four matches this edition. The last time they had more wins was in 1999 (5).

#### **Head-to-Head**

- > Finland and Canada have faced each other eight times, with Finland winning five times.
  - > Finland have only won more matches Korea (seven) and against Portugal (six).
  - > They played four times against each other in last year's edition, with both teams winning twice.
- In two of Canada's three wins against Finland they lost the first set.
- > Finland and Canada each a best final rank of seven. Finland in 2007 and Canada in 1992.



## **KOREA v NETHERLANDS**

### **Korea**

- > Korea started their 2013 World League campaign on a high note. For the second time ever, and for the first time since 1993, they won their first two matches (both 3-1 against Japan). They lost the following four.
- > The last year in which Korea won more than two World League matches: 2011 (3). More than three: 2006 (4).
- > Korea have won only 22.6% of their matches in World League history (43 of 190), the lowest percentage of all countries with at least 100 matches in the competition.
- > Korea could surpass Portugal (currently 22.8%) and/or Japan (23.0%) if they win at least once and these rivals do not.
- > Han Sun-Soo is the most productive setter in the World League this year. He has a 10.73 per-set-average.

### **Netherlands**

- > The first match this weekend will be the 250th for Netherlands in the World League. Only Brazil, Italy, Russia and Cuba have played more.
- > Of their previous 249 World League encounters, Netherlands have won 136 and lost 113. Netherlands have won exactly 500 sets (429 lost).
- > Netherlands are in their first World League campaign since 2010. Back then, they won three of their first four away matches, including two in Suwon, Korea.
- > Netherlands have won four of their first six World League matches in 2013, the most for them since 1998, when they won their first five.

### **Head-to-Head**

- > Korea and Netherlands have met each other 16 times in the World League. The Dutch have lost only once, in their first ever encounter in 1993.
- > These countries have been paired together in four intercontinental rounds: 1993, 1994, 1997 and 2010.
- > Netherlands have won six of their last nine matches against Korea in straight sets, including the last three in Korea. Last match with more than one set won by Korea: 3-2 Netherlands win in May 1994.
- > Netherlands have won 23 of their last 24 matches against Asian opposition, including the last six. Only exception: 3-0 at Nanjing (CHN) in 2009.



## PORTUGAL v JAPAN

### Portugal

- > Portugal have won three of their six World League matches in 2013. In 2012 they won none of their 12 total matches, in 2011 they won three of 12.
- > Portugal have lost 297 sets in their World League history (124 won). They will become the 15th country with at least 300 sets lost if they give up three against Japan.
- > Alexandre Ferreira is the best server in the World League this year. He has a 0.52 points-per-set average. His 12 aces are also a season-high, alongside France's Earvin Ngapeth.
- > Vadir Sequeira (201) is one of two players with more than 200 spike attempts in the World League this year. The other is Serbia's Aleksandar Atanasijevic with 213.

### Japan

- > The second match against Portugal will be the 250th for Japan in the World League.
- > Japan have suffered the most defeats of all teams in World League history: 191 (alongside 57 wins).
- > Two weeks ago, Japan snapped a 22-match losing streak by winning twice against Finland. These were their first consecutive World League wins since 2008.
- > Against Finland on 15 June (3-1 victory), Japan conceded only 79 points, a record low for them in a 4- or 5-set match in the current scoring format (since 1999).

### Head-to-Head

- > Portugal and Japan have played each other four times in both the 2001 and the 2005 intercontinental round. Of these eight matches, Japan claimed five and Portugal three.
- > Japan have won one of four away matches against Portugal. At home, they remained unbeaten against the Portuguese: four encounters, four victories.
- > The last three doubleheaders between these teams have been swept by the home side. Only the first meetings in 2001 (in Espinho, Portugal) were split.
- > Japan could become the first of these teams to win three consecutive mutual matches.