



## FIVB WORLD LEAGUE PREVIEWS WEEK 3 – JUNE 5-8, 2014

### Pool A: Brazil - Iran (June 6 & 7)

#### Head-to-Head

- These teams have never met in the World League.
- For Brazil, Iran will be their 23rd different opponent in the competition.
- Brazil have won 25 out of 27 World League matches against Asian opposition, including each of their last 19. Their last World League defeat against an Asian team came more than 20 years ago. They were beaten by Japan on July 4, 1993.

#### Brazil

- Brazil have lost four of their last five World League matches.
- Brazil lost their previous match 3-0 against Poland. They have not lost successive World League matches in straight sets since being blanked by Italy and Yugoslavia in 2000.
- Brazil have already lost three matches in the intercontinental round this season. Last year, their number of defeats at this stage was one (in 10 matches).

#### Iran

- Iran have lost their last three World League matches. They have never lost four in a row.
- Including last season, Iran have now played 12 World League matches. They started by losing their first three, then won five of their next six. After that, they lost their next three.
- Of the 20 teams that have seen action in the 2014 World League, Iran is the only team that has yet to win a set.



## Pool A: Italy - Poland (June 6 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- These teams have met on six previous occasions in the World League. Italy have won five and Poland have won one.
- Italy have won their last five World League meetings, following a 3-2 win by Poland on June 11, 1999.
- Italy's most recent World League victory over Poland dates back to July 7, 2011 when the visiting Italians blanked Poland 3-0 in Gdansk.

### Italy

- Italy have won their first four matches of their 2014 World League campaign and combined with last season they have won five in a row.
- Italy have not won six consecutive matches in the World League since they started the 2011 season with six straight wins.
- Italy have won their last two in straight sets. They have not won three in a row by 3-0 since 2011. They have not won four in a row by 3-0 since 1999.

### Poland

- Poland split the series with Brazil last weekend, with each team winning and losing a match in straight sets.
- Since winning their first and only World League title in 2012, Poland have lost seven of their next 12 matches in the competition.
- For the seventh straight World League season, Poland have failed to win both of their first two matches.



## Pool B: USA – Russia (June 6 & 7)

### Head-to-Head

- This is the 21st and 22nd World League meeting between USA and Russia (including Soviet Union and Commonwealth of Independent States). Russia have won 14 of the previous 20 encounters.
- Since 1994, USA have recorded only one World League victory over Russia (8 meetings): 3-0 in the 2010 intercontinental round.
- Before claiming gold at the 2012 Olympic Games, Russia beat USA 3-2 in the group stage.
- Maxwell Holt (USA), Sergey Grankin (RUS), Denis Biriukov (RUS) and Artem Ermakov (RUS) are teammates for the Russian side Dinamo.
- Matthew Anderson (USA) plays at Zenit Kazan (RUS), alongside teammates Nikolay Apalikov (RUS), Evgeny Sivozhelez (RUS), Alexey Verbov (RUS) and Maxim Mikhaylov (RUS).

### USA

- USA have won their opening two matches of this World League campaign and can win their first three matches for the first time since 2008.
- The last time USA started a World League campaign with four consecutive wins was in 2000, when they triumphed in their opening 10 matches.
- USA are one of seven teams to have won the World League, triumphing in 2008.

### Russia

- Defending champions Russia started this World League season with two defeats against Serbia. They can lose three World League matches in a row for the first time since 2006.
- Last season, 2012 champions Poland started their campaign with four consecutive defeats.
- Russia can lose their opening three World League matches for the first time since 1997, when they lost their first 10 matches of the season.
- Russia have won the World League on three occasions (2002, 2011, 2013) and are one of only three countries to have won the competition multiple times along with Brazil (nine times) and Italy (eight times).



## Pool B: Bulgaria – Serbia (June 7 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- Bulgaria and Serbia (including Yugoslavia and Serbia and Montenegro) have met seven times before in the World League. Bulgaria have won four matches, Serbia are on three victories.
- Bulgaria have won the last three intercontinental round matches against Serbia, since a 3-2 defeat in May 2003.
- Last year at the European Championships, Serbia beat Bulgaria in straight sets in the bronze medal match.
- Sasa Starovic (SRB) and Todor Skrimov (BUL) are teammates at Italian side Andreoli Latina.
- Valentin Bratoev (BUL) and Viktor Yosifov (BUL) both play at VfB Friedrichshafen (GER), alongside teammate Nikola Jovovic (SRB).

### Bulgaria

- Bulgaria are on a five-match losing streak in the World League and can lose six consecutive matches for the first time in the competition since 2004-2005.
- Bulgaria started this World League campaign with two defeats against USA. They have lost their opening three matches only once (2005) and can lose the first four matches of a World League season for the first time in history.
- Bulgaria are making their 17th appearance in the World League. Despite never making the podium, they have finished fourth on five different occasions.
- Last year, Bulgaria came fourth, falling to Italy in five sets in the bronze medal match.

### Serbia

- Serbia have won their opening two matches of this World League campaign and can win their first three matches for the first time since 2010, when they won their first five intercontinental matches of the season.
- Serbia are making their 17th appearance in the World League (including Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro). They are the most decorated country in the competition yet to win gold (four silver and three bronze).



## Pool C: Belgium – Canada (June 6 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- This is the first ever World League meeting between Belgium and Canada.
- For debutants Belgium their two matches against Canada will be their third and fourth in the World League. They won their previous two, beating non-European side Australia 3-0 and 3-1.
- Canada are unbeaten in their last five World League matches against teams from Europe, since losing 3-1 to Portugal last year. Two wins against Belgium would see them equal their best ever World League winning streak versus European opposition: seven consecutive wins from 1992-1999.
- Belgium's Kevin Klinkenberg and Canada's Nicholas Hoag are teammates at Tours VB.

### Belgium

- Belgium have won their first two World League matches and can become the first debutants to win their first three since Cuba in 1991. Cuba went on to win their first 13 matches that year and eventually lost the 1991 final against Italy (3-0).
- The only other team to start their World League career with three consecutive wins are the Netherlands, who won their first three matches in the inaugural 1990 season before losing to Russia in their fourth match.
- Matthijs Verhanneman has a receiving efficiency of 84.62%, best of all players this World League season.

### Canada

- Canada have started off their 2014 campaign with two wins against Finland (3-0 and 3-2). They won their opening three matches only once, when they beat Argentina twice and Yugoslavia once in 2000.
- In that 2000 season, Canada lost each of their nine matches following those first three wins.
- Canada have won nine of their last 10 World League matches, conceding only a 3-0 defeat against Brazil in last season's final round. They won 23 times in all their 79 matches prior to this streak
- Gavin Schmitt has a 58.73% spiking succes rate, second only to Netherland's Dick Kooy (64.58%) in group 2.



## Pool C: Australia – Finland (June 7 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- Australia and Finland will meet for the first time in the World League.
- Both Australia (two losses against Belgium) and Finland (two losses against Canada) are yet to win their first World League match in 2014. Bulgaria, Russia, Iran and Japan are the only other teams still waiting for a win.

### Australia

- Australia have lost all of their 14 World League matches so far. Puerto Rico is the only other team to have never won any of their World League matches (12 losses, all in 2011).
- They have won one set more than Puerto Rico though, five to six. No team has fewer set wins.
- Australia came closest to a win on July 2, 1999 when they were 2-1 up against Russia but eventually lost 3-2. To date, this remains the only World League match in which they won multiple sets.

### Finland

- Finland have started their World League campaign with back-to-back losses. They have lost their first three matches twice before: in 1993 and in 2008.
- In 2008 they had their worst ever start to a season, losing their first seven matches.
- They have won four of their last six five-setters, but lost their most recent one: 3-2 against Canada, their last World League match.
- Matti Oivanen has blocked for an average of 1.13 per set, best of all players in group 2 this season.



## Pool D: Argentina - Japan (June 6 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- Argentina and Japan have clashed four times before in the World League, with Argentina winning on all four occasions.
- Japan managed to win only one set against Argentina in their previous meetings. They lost three World League encounters in straight sets.
- Japan are winless in their last 39 World League matches against teams from the Americas, since beating USA in straight sets in 1993.

### Argentina

- In their last 15 World League matches Argentina have only succeeded to win once, a 3-0 victory over Germany last week.
- Conte Facundo was Argentina's leading scorer in their last match (21), a 3-2 defeat against Germany, making him the third best overall scorer in group 2.
- In 15 appearances in the World League (2014 not included), Argentina have never succeeded to win a medal. Their best performance was the fourth place in 2011, losing to Poland in straight sets in the bronze medal match.

### Japan

- Japan have lost six World League matches in a row, their worst run since 22 in 2011-2013.
- Last week, Japan lost in straight sets against France, their 100th straight set defeat in World League history.
- Japan currently have three players in the top 5 of the group 2 scorers list.
- Japan have only reached the Finals of the World League once in 2008.



## Pool D: Germany - France (June 7 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- Germany and France have never clashed before in the World League.
- The countries last met at the 2009 European Championships (competitive matches only), when France beat Germany 3-1 in the group stage.
- Philippe Tuitoga (FRA), Mory Sidibe (FRA) and Markus Steuerwald (GER) are teammates for French side Paris Volley.
- Jenia Grebennikov (FRA) and Baptiste Geiler (FRA) both play at VfB Friedrichshafen (GER), alongside teammate Jan Zimmermann (GER).

### Germany

- Christian Fromm (15, 28 and 16) was Germany's top scorer in three out of their last four World League matches.
- In the first two weeks of the 2014 World League season, Germany have won three out of four matches.
- Germany have only reached the Finals of the World League once in 2012.

### France

- France have won their last seven matches, which marks their best winning streak in World League history.
- France have won their last three World League matches in straight sets and can record four straight sets victories in a row for the first time in the competition.
- Unbeaten France can win their opening five matches for the first time since 2002. By winning both encounters with Germany, France will break their own competition record.



## Pool E: Czech Republic - Korea Republic (June 5 & 6)

### Head-to-Head

- This will be the first and second meeting between these nations in the World League.
- The Czech Republic have played four matches against Asian opposition in the World League, winning all four matches (all against Japan in 2003).
- For the Czech Republic, Korea will be their ninth different opponent in the World League. For Korea, the Czechs are their 19th different opponent in the competition.

### Czech Republic

- Czech Republic have won five of their six home matches in the World League (all in 2003). Their only defeat was their last home match against Greece (3-2).
- The first match against Korea will be the Czech Republic's 20th in the World League. If they win, they have won 12 of their first 20 World League matches, a feat only seven other nations have achieved.
- Kamil Baranek has an average of 0.57 aces per set in the 2014 World League, third highest (group 1 and 2) only behind Alexandre Ferreira (POR, 0.86) and Dick Kooy (NED, 0.71).

### Korea Republic

- Korea have won three of their last four World League matches, only losing against the Netherlands in this run. They have also won three of their last four away matches in the World League.
- The last time Korea won four matches in a span of maximum five matches was 21 years ago, when they won four matches in a row between 1992 and 1993.
- This is Korea's 16th World League appearance and they can win three of their first four matches for only the third time following the 1993 and 2011 editions (if they beat the Czech Republic twice).



## Pool E: Netherlands – Portugal (June 7 & 8)

### Head-to-Head

- This will be the third and fourth World League meeting between these nations. The previous two matches were played in the Netherlands last season, with each team winning one match.
- These nations also met in the first ever European Championships in 1948. In Italy, Portugal won 3-0 and finished the tournament in fourth place, while the Netherlands finished sixth (last).
- Alexandre Ferreira (POR) and Dick Kooy (NED) have the highest ace per set ratio in the current World League tournament (group 1 and 2). Ferreira has an average of 0.86 and Kooy 0.71.

### Netherlands

- The Netherlands have failed to win both home matches in one World League weekend in each of the last two times (against Portugal in June 2013 and against Korea last week).
- They have only failed to win both home matches in a single weekend three consecutive times once this century, when they hosted Italy, Bulgaria and Brazil between 2009 and 2010.
- Dick Kooy has a spike rate of 65% this World League season, which is only topped by Iranian Ebadipour Gahra H. Milad (69%).

### Portugal

- Portugal have won only one of their last five World League matches. Their only victory in this span was against the Czech Republic last week.
- They have played their last six matches at home and play an away match for the first time since facing the Netherlands in June last year. They have won three of their last five away matches after losing 10 in a row on the road.
- Miguel Rodrigues is the setter with the second-highest average of 7.14 running (excellent) sets per set played by his team. He is only behind Bulgarian Bratoev Georgi (7.67).



### **Pool F: Turkey - Cuba (June 6)**

- Cuba come off their joint worst World League campaign. In 2013, they finished 13th (like in 2002 and 2003). This came immediately after finishing third in 2012, their best result since 2005.
- Turkey are Cuba's 21st World League opponent. This is the first time these teams meet in a main international competition.
- Cuba will open their 24th World League campaign. Only Brazil and Italy have that many or more (25 each).

### **Pool F: Mexico - Tunisia (June 6)**

- Two World League debutants meet each other. The last time this happened was in 1993, when Russia and Greece crossed as first-time participants.
- Mexico (Mexico City) are hosts during the first week of World League play in Pool F. Tunis (TUN) will be next week's venue.
- On the world ranking, Tunisia (13th) are the highest ranked nation of the three debutants in Pool F. Turkey are 45th, Mexico 22nd.

### **Pool G: Slovakia – Spain (June 6)**

- Spain are back in the World League after five seasons without participation. They participated once in the last nine years (13th in 2007).
- The last meeting between these teams took place in 2009, when Spain won 3-2 at the European Championship.

### **Pool G: Puerto Rico - China (June 6)**

- Puerto Rico will take part in their second World League, after coming in 16th in 2011. They will be the hosts during the first weekend of Pool G play.
- Puerto Rico remained winless in their first World League, winning a total of five sets, of which four were taken against United States and one against Poland.
- China return to the World League after a three-year absence. From 2010, they take a six-match winless streak with them. China won one of their 12 World League matches in their last campaign: 3-1 against France.



### **Pool F: Tunisia - Cuba (June 7)**

- Cuba and Tunisia meet for the first time in the World League.
- Most recently, Tunisia and Cuba met in the first round group stage of the 2010 World Championships. Cuba won in straight sets.
- Cuba have played one other African side in the World League. They met Egypt on eight occasions (2006 and 2007), losing only two sets and never more than one in a single match.

### **Pool F: Mexico - Turkey (June 7)**

- These teams have never met in main international tournaments.
- The host nation of this week's play meets the hosts of the final four. Turkey are already qualified for the final weekend in Bursa (TUR).

### **Pool G: Spain - China (June 7)**

- Spain and China have been in the same pool on two occasions in the World League. In 1997, both teams won twice and in 2002, Spain won all four matches.
- Since the 2002 World League season, these teams have not met in main international tournaments.
- Spain have two straight sets wins in eight World League matches against China. China have won one match in straight sets against Spain.

### **Pool G: Puerto Rico - Slovakia (June 7)**

- These teams will meet for the first time in international competitive tournaments.
- Puerto Rico played one European side in their only World League to date. In 2011, Poland beat them in all four matches, three times in straight sets and once with a 3-1 sets score.
- For the first time in a main international tournament, Slovakia will meet a non-European side.



### **Pool F: Turkey - Tunisia (June 8)**

- Both World League debutants will host a weekend of World League play this season. Tunisia the second set of round robin matches, Turkey the final four.
- Tunisia are the second CAVB side to take part in the World League, after Egypt who played 48 matches in four appearances. Egypt's best final rank: third in 2006 (debut), 2007 and 2008.

### **Pool F: Mexico - Cuba (June 8)**

- Cuba have played Mexico most recently during the Panamerican Games in 2011. Both in the group stage (3-0) and in the semifinal (3-2), Cuba won.
- Cuba's World League record against other NORCECA sides is mixed. They beat Canada six out of seven times, but lost four of six against USA.

### **Pool G: China - Slovakia (June 8)**

- These teams will meet for the first time in main international tournaments.
- Of all European nations they faced in the World League, China only have a positive balance against Finland (4 wins, 0 defeats).
- China have never won their first three matches in a World League campaign. They have won two of the first three on two occasions, in 1993 (Cuba, the Netherlands) and 2008 (Japan, Poland).

### **Pool G: Puerto Rico - Spain (June 8)**

- These teams will meet for the first time in the World League.
- Puerto Rico and Spain played each other in the 2007 World Cup, with Puerto Rico winning in straight sets.
- Spain have met one other Caribbean side in the World League. Of 13 matches against Cuba, they won five, but none since May 1998 (3 straight defeats).