



Russia v Brazil

Brazil

- Brazil have reached their 13th World League final, the highest number of all countries in the history of the tournament. They made the final in 11 of the last 13 seasons (incl. 2013).
- Brazil have won eight of the past 12 World Leagues. However, they did not win the last two.
- Brazil could become the first team with double-digit World League wins. They have won it nine times, with Italy (8) and Russia (2) as the only other two with multiple victories.
- By reaching the final, Brazil avoided back-to-back final-less years. Two missed finals in a row - this has not happened to Brazil since 1999-2000.
- Against Bulgaria, Brazil became the first country to reach 1,000 sets won in World League play (1,002 to be exact). No other country has reached 900, however Italy (currently 898) can reach this number in their 3rd place playoff match against Bulgaria.
- Brazil have played the most matches of all countries in the World League (388), but they have lost the fewest (83) of all teams with more than 140 encounters.

Russia

- Russia held Italy to only 81 points in the semifinal and advanced with a 3-1 victory.
- This was Russia's fifth straight win against Italy in World League Finals. Last loss - July, 2000.
- Russia have reached the final for the eighth time in the World League. They have won only two of the previous seven (2002, 2011). Five lost finals has been preceded only by Cuba (also 5). A defeat against Russia will make them outright leaders in this category.
- In all four previous finals Russia competed, Brazil have been their opponents. This year will make it five in a row.
- If Russia win, they will be reigning Olympic and World League champions for the first time.

Head-to-Head

- The World League winners of 2010 (Brazil) and 2011 (Russia) will meet in this year's final.
- This is a repeat of the 2012 Olympic final, when Russia beat Brazil 3-2. Remarkably, also this year's World League 3rd place playoff features the same countries as in London.
- These teams match up in the final for the sixth time. In 1993, 2007 and 2010, Brazil beat Russia; in 2002 and 2011, it was the other way around.
- Brazil v Russia will equal Italy v Cuba as the most contested World League final pairing. Italy beat Cuba in all five common finals, all in the 1990s.
- Brazil and Russia will meet for the 32nd time in the World League. Of the previous 31 matches, Brazil won 19 and Russia 12. Their last meeting was on Wednesday when Russia won 3-2 in the Group Stage in Mar del Plata (Argentina).
- In all competitions, Brazil and Russia (not including USSR and EUN) have played 39 times, with the former winning 24 (12 in straight sets) and the latter 15. Last match: the aforementioned 2012 Olympic Games final.
- Russia have won their last two matches against Brazil. They could make it three straight for the second time ever. In 1998, they beat Brazil on three consecutive occasions.

Italy v Bulgaria

Italy

- In their semifinal match against Russia, Italy could only manage to compile 81 total points. This was not enough to reach the final of this year's World League: 1-3.
- After having been the most dominant force in men's volleyball in the 1990s, winning eight of the first 11 World Leagues, Italy have not won the tournament since 2000.
- Despite missing out of the final, Italy have ensured their first top-four finish in the World League since 2004, when they finished second. Italy's best finish in the last eight years is sixth (2006, 2010, 2011).
- A pattern: Italy always play (and win) the World League bronze medal match in years ending in '3'. They beat Cuba in 1993 and Czech Republic in 2003, and they face Bulgaria in 2013. (They also played for bronze in 2002, but lost to Yugoslavia.)
- Italy have won 898 sets in the World League. They could become the second team with 900, after Brazil (1,002).

Bulgaria

- Bulgaria's run for gold was stopped by a dominant Brazil side, which allowed only 70 points in a 3-1 win over the Bulgarians.
- Bulgaria played their fifth semifinal in the World League, and they lost for the fifth time. On the past four occasions (1994, 2004, 2006, 2012), they finished the season in fourth place.
- Bulgaria now have the chance to set their best ever result in World League play. They never finished higher than fourth place.
- Bulgaria will compete in their eighth World League Final Round match against Italy, the most they played against of any opponent in the decisive stages.

Head-to-Head

- Just like the final, the 3rd place playoff is a replay of the 2012 Olympic Games in London. Back then, Italy beat Bulgaria 3-1.
- These teams will meet for the 20th time in the World League. Italy have a narrow edge, with 11 wins compared to eight for Bulgaria.
- These teams have met twice in a KO setup. In both the 1994 and the 2004 semifinal, Italy beat Bulgaria in straight sets.