

Day 1 of the UANA 2011 PanAmerican Junior (17U) Water Polo Championships began on Saturday, August 6 with a sunny day in San Juan, Puerto Rico at the beautiful San Juan Natatorium hosted by the Federación Puertorriqueña de Natación. The Opening Ceremonies, the Technical Meeting and the draw had been held the previous day.

Seven federations (PER, BRA, COL, PUR, TRI, USA and CAN) entered boys teams, while there were 5 entries for the girls (CAN, USA, PUR, TRI and BRA).

The first game of the day saw COL defeat the host team from PUR by a score of 9-8. COL opened the scoring first but the score was tied 2-2 at the end of the first quarter. PUR had its only lead of the game during this period, 2-1 but COL tied the game within 17 seconds of the PUR team taking the lead. The game was close throughout with COL leading 4-2 and 7-6 at the end of the next two periods. With 1:48 left in the game, PUR scored to bring them within 1 but were unable to score during the rest of the game, losing by 1. Luis Mohica (PUR) led all scorers with 4 but was excluded for misconduct in the last 5 minutes of the game. The balanced COL attack saw William Moncado, Santiago Arevalo and Joymar Talaga score a pair of goals each. [Referees: Roque (USA) and Painchaud (CAN)]

Next came the game BRA-USA. BRA surprised their opposition by jumping out to a 3-0 lead and never let the USA recover. BRA led 3-2 at the end of the first period however the Americans came back to tie the score at 4-4 by half-time. BRA scored the first goal to take a 5-4 lead but the USA tied it at 5-5 with 3:15 left in the third period. 2 BRA goals resulted in the score at the end of 3 periods being 7-5 in favour of the South American country. The lead was extended to 8-5 after the 1st minute of period 4 and BRA hung on to win by a final score of 8-7. Guilherme Gomes supplied the scoring punch for BRA netting 4 goals. The leading scorer for the USA was Daniel Stevens with 3. Both players were the class of their teams but the BRA depth was the difference. [Referees: Hackshaw (TRI) and Murray (CAN)].

The final game of the day for the boys had CAN burying the much smaller and undermanned PER team by a score of 18-2. It was the first lopsided game of the tournament. CAN had quarter leads of 4-1, 6-1 and 11-1. For CAN, the major scorers were David Lapin with 6 and each of Martin Pelland, Russel Lenferma and Rodrigo Rojas scoring 3 times. Rodrigo Tejada and Jesus Angulo scored for PER. The main difference in the game was the size and swimming ability of the CAN team, however 2 CAN players did receive misconducts during the game. [Referees: Rodrigues (BRA), Navarro (USA)].

The girls competition opened with a game between USA and BRA – a duplicate of the boys game earlier in the day. This time, the USA prevailed beating BRA by a score of 9-6. The USA led 2:1 at the end of the first quarter and 5-3 at halftime with stellar goaltending by Alexis Hollinrake in the US net. The US extended its lead with 2 unanswered 3rd period goals while BRA came back in the 4th period to win the quarter by a score of 3-2. The US scoring was led by Devin Grab, Kacey Avalos and Alessandra Vilches with 2 goals each while for BRA, Diana Abla and Mirella Coutinho replied with 2 each as well. [Referees: Del Valle (PUR), Smith (TRI)].

The day ended with a match between PUR and TRI in front of a large, boisterous and enthusiastic hometown crowd. The partisan audience left satisfied and happy as their team prevailed by a score of PUR – 14 TRI – 8. The game was close throughout. PUR took a lead of 3-2 at the end of the first period. TRI drew close on a number of occasions but was unable to take the lead. The score at halftime had PUR leading by 2 with the score 6-4. At the end of the 3rd period, PUR had maintained its lead by 2 with a score of 9-7. The experience of the PUR team showed in the 4th period as they took the game going away winning the last quarter by 4 goals. The top scorer for PUR was Nicole Schmidt with 5 goals while TRI was led by a quartet with 2 goals each – Farelle Ferreira, Anya Welch, Renee Chin-Lee and Jenique Duval. [Referees: Florestano (BRA), Cote (COL)]

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