

Belgrade hot shots face Freo in final



Partizan Belgrade have emerged as tournament favourites after advancing to tonight's gold-medal game against the Fremantle Mariners at the Tom Hoad Cup.

The European powerhouse booked their spot in the decider after beating China 14-9 at Bicton Pool yesterday while the Mariners overcame the Barbarians 10-8 last night.

It was Partizan's third victory in as many games at the ninth chapter of the WA water polo tournament, following success against the Barbarians (9-6) and Mariners (13-9).

Milos Vukicevic maintained his stellar form yesterday, blasting in five goals against China after hauls of six against Fremantle and three against the Barbarians.

Vukicevic proved to be the difference, breaking the deadlock after the scores were tied at 9-9 in the final quarter. China had looked capable of an upset after consecutive goals to Pan Ning put them ahead 9-8 early in the last stanza.

But Ning's double strike stung Partizan Belgrade into action, the Europeans rattling on six unanswered goals to guarantee victory.

Vukicevic and 38-year-old veteran Vladimir Vujasinovic shape as key players for Partizan Belgrade.

Considered one of the most accomplished players in the history of the sport, Vujasinovic lined up in gold-medal winning teams at the 2005 world championships, the 2001, 2003 and 2006 European championship, the FINA World League from 2005 to 2008, the FINA World Cup in 2006 and Mediterranean Games in 1997.

Tonight's gold-medal game has been rescheduled from 8.15pm to 6.30pm to allow for Partizan Belgrade to make their flight out of Perth at 10.30pm.

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