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Croatia wins final dress rehearsal against Montenegro

As last test before the World Cup in France the Croatian national team played a tournament on home-ground, the "Croatia Cup". After a 35-30 against Tunisia on Sunday the team of Zeljko Babic won also the final against Montenegro, the final score was 24-22. Best scorer was Zlatko Horvat. Nemanja Grbovic scored six for the guest team.

The host was the favourite at the tournament in Croatian City Umag, nevertheless that one of the key players rested: Domagoj Duvnjak was not on the pitch, the other players got playing time before the start of the World Cup. Coach Zeljko Babic used the chance and changed the players very often, his starting seven set the score in the first minutes to 5-2 and three goals were the difference between the opponents at the break, too. With an 11-8 on the scoreboard the sides were changed.

Croatia played a good defence in the first half, but in the second the host missed several good chances to score - like several fastbreaks. The favourite was not able to increase the distance, but denied Montenegro also a catch-up thanks to a still good defence. Montenegro was not able to tie the match and so Croatia managed to take the lead into the final minute and celebrate with their fans a 24-22, giving the team the victory at the 'Croatia Cup'.

Today Croatian coach Zeljko Babic will announce his sixteen players for the World Cup in France. In group C of the preliminary round Croatia will start against Saudi Arabia on 13. January, other opponents are Chile, Hungary, Belarus and Germany. First aim of the team is to reach one of the first four places in the group and so the next stage of the World Cup.

Croatia - Montenegro 24 : 22 (11:8)

Croatia:

Ivan Stevanović, Ivan Pešić;

Zlatko Horvat 8, Luka Cindrić, 6, Šime Ivić, 3, Željko Musa 1, Marko Mamić, 1, Sandro Obranović, 1, Manuel Štrlek 1, Tin Kontrec 1, Lovro Mihić, 2

Montenegro:

Nebojša Simić, Rade Mijatović;

Miloš Božović, 1, Nemanja Grbović, 6, Vladan Lipovina 5, Marko Č ampar 1, Marko Lasica 2, Vasko Ševaljević, 2, Božo Anđelić, 2, Miloš Vujović, 1, Igor Marković, 2.

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