

29.01.2017 18:56 Uhr - Weltmeisterschaft - Finale - PR France 2017

## World Cup: Norway with great first half, but France wins sixth title

**After trailing through the entire first half, France proved why they are one of the most successful national teams in the history of handball with an outstanding second 30 minutes that earned Les Experts their sixth IHF Men's World Championship trophy. The victory also means France defend their 2015 title, which they won against Qatar in Doha two years ago. Despite the loss, Norway celebrate their first ever medal at an international competition, as they claim silver after previously recording a highest ranking of fourth, at the EHF EURO 2016.**

It was a one-for-one game with Norway holding the edge through the opening minutes, before a neat play from Sander Sagosen into Bjarte Myrhol opened a two-goal gap for the Scandinavian side at 6:4 in the ninth. Norway goalkeeper Torbjorn Bergerud saved his second in France's next attack and it was clear the momentum early on was behind the team playing their maiden final, despite the 15,609 spectators in the arena supporting Les Experts.

Norway maintained a steady one to two-goal advantage as the half progressed, and goalkeeper Espen Christensen kept a 9:7 lead for his team when he came on for Bergerud and saved a penalty shot against Michael Guigou. Each of France's goals were met with huge applause, but Norway were unphased and their attack seemed to have little trouble against the hosts' 6-0.

When France coaches Didier Dinart and Guillaume Gille called the first time-out of the match in the 17th, Norway's back court had the highest scorers as Kent Robin Tonnesen and Espen Lie Hansen were having little trouble finding the back of the net. The right and left back hammered in three goals each by the time Dinart replaced Omeyer with Vincent Gerard in France's goal.

When coach Christian Berge decided to give Lie Hansen a rest on the 20-minute mark he left the court with four goals to his name, while Tonnesen also tallied four out of four attempts, at which point Norway kept the two-goal distance at 13:11. The hosts chased their opponents but seemed at a loss for how to create opportunities in attack, while Norway's positional play made finding gaps look effortless.

With five minutes remaining in the half, Norway had the chance to take a three-goal lead for the second time, but Gerard made his first save and the score stayed at 16:14 - and that save was the turning point of the match. From that moment the goalkeeper lifted his game, stopping two more shots through the dying minutes of the half. Gerard's work enabled his team to record a 4:1 run, closing the gap and turning the tide of the match completely as France claimed the advantage one second before the half-time buzzer thanks to a fast break from Valentin Porte.

When the match resumed Les Experts were far stronger, and as they took a 22:18 lead five minutes in, Berge was forced to use his time-out. It did little to help however - as the clock ticked on it was clear the early run France recorded through the start of the half would prove crucial. With a quarter of the match remaining France stayed in front by three at 25:22, and as the last nine minutes began France hit 30 goals to Norway's 23. Though Norway continued fighting to the end, France only had to hold on to the final whistle - and they did so to finish with a seven-goal advantage, final score 33:26. googletag.cmd.push(function() { googletag.display('div-gpt-ad-1380148910362-0'); });