

13.06.2015 17:47 Uhr - Weltmeisterschaft - Qualif.: Play-off - Christian Ciemalla / ewo

## Russia celebrate as German women miss qualification for the WC in Denmark 2015

**The starting position before today's match had not been great for the German team and it did not improve in the first few minutes of the return match in Astrachan, as they trailed by five in addition when the score had climbed to 3:0 after four minutes. And even though the performance was far from flawless the Germans could still hope to catch up after the break. Russia, who themselves did not play spectacularly, could not distance their opponents. At 18:18 the guests had at least settled somewhat and could hope to turn the match. But the continuing mistakes rendered that impossible, Russia moved away by three and secured a narrow lead at halftime. Germany, for whom Anne Hubinger was the topscorer, managed to equalise once more, but Marennikovas goal for 27:26 was the deciding shot, the Russians celebrated as the Germans lamented about missing the sporting qualification for the World Championships in Denmark, their hopes are now reduced to receiving a wildcard, which may soon become an all too regular occurrence for German teams.**

Irrespective of the defeat in the first leg match, the Germans had travelled to Astrachan highly motivated and optimistic. But once the match was started the excitement and ambition was not so apparent, as the hosts dictated the rhythm of the match. Kuznetsova had scored the first goal, followed by a double bill by Kochetova. The gap had grown to five goals in four minutes, as the first German attack sets ended in the offensive Russian defence, the first goal for the guests being scored by Anja Althaus, but the Russians answered immediately, the same happened with Lone Fischer who scored the next goal for Germany.

Again the German attack struggled with the offensive Russian defence, who moved along well, stopping the German attack in its tracks and provoking offensive fouls, three happened in the first eight minutes alone. Russia was also more dynamic and dangerous up front, players like Olga Akopina showed their individual class. Germany in turn seemed to find their rhythm a bit better and goals by Nadgornaja from a distance and Althaus after a pass from Wohlbold halved the gap on the day. But after a simple cross move Akopina scored yet again and Marennikova through fastbreak and Kochetova out of a one to one situation extended their lead to four goals again at 9:5.

National team coach Jakob Vestergaard took his timeout but his team missed the next penalty as well. But thanks to the ever reliable Clara Woltering Nina Wörz and Luisa Schulze were given chances which they used to reduce the gap to two once more. The guests had stabilised their defence but the number of faults in attack remained high and hindered any attempt to catch up. And even though Clara Woltering made more saves her team could not use the advantage, instead Russia, who were themselves making errors, scored two goals in a row to move to 11:7. Russia clearly lacked focus as Kochetova made an error during a penalty shot, but the lead for the hosts stayed in place, at halftime the score of 13:10 meant that Germany had to catch up five goals in order to qualify for Denmark 2015.

It was Russia again who scored the first goal after the break, but Germany seemed to improve. Vestergaard had taken Susann Müller, who had not performed well, off the pitch, giving HC Leipzigs young back player Anne Hubinger a chance. After a goal by Luisa Schulze from short distance Hubinger scored twice before Leverkusens Kim Naidzinavicius equalised at 16:16. The Germans even had the chance to take the lead, but every good move was followed by a mistake, so Russia had few problems to remain in control. Woltering, who had taken a short break reentered the match and after the 19:19 by Naidzinavicius Russia took their timeout.

Evgenij Trefilov reorganised his team, but the fact that Germany failed to turn the match was more down to their own mistakes rather than Russias brilliance. The hosts played a compact and aggressive defence and were quick to return into formation after attackplay, but Germany had only themselves to blame as they missed the next two chances in play as well as a penalty shot. The hosts extended their lead to 22:19 with goals by Kochetova and Akopina (2), but also wasted chances as a penalty shot was saved by Clara Woltering, who was one of few players who reached their potential in the German team, and another ball who had been grabbed from Angie Geschke, was not used up front. Russia nevertheless scored the 23:20 and 24:21, ensuring the guests were increasingly running out of time.

The German players now seemed to throw everything into the last minutes, suddenly applying the pressure

that had lacked over most of the previous 55 minutes. A successfully converted penalty shot by Isabell Klein and a save by Woltering were followed by Hubingers score for the 24:23. Russia scored again but Geschke used a bounced ball to score the 25:24. As more goals were scored overall the Germans only required another three goals with four minutes to play. The chance for an equaliser was there when Woltering made yet another save and also saved the resulting throw when Russia caught the ball bouncing off goal, but once again Woltering could not rely on her teammates to catch the ball, so Marennnikova used the opportunity to score the 26:24. Germany, who now attempted a 4+2 defence, were seriously short of time by now.

Jakob Vestergaard took his last timeout and Svenja Huber scored the next goal for 26:25 and the Germans were in luck at this stage. Russia had scored a goal, but just before Evegrij Trefilov had placed his timeout card on the desk, the next goal was void through an offensive foul. Germany chose the obvious last ditch attempt, trying to gain balls through an offensive defence, once successful when a ball won was used by Althaus for the 26:26 equaliser. Fifty seconds remained and the German team tried to gain a ball through a shot trap, in case Woltering saved the ball, but Marennnikova was unimpressed and score the 27:26, celebrating successful qualification for the world championship finals with her team.

Russia - Germany 27:26 (13:10)

Russia:

Sedoykina, Erokhina; Kuznetcova (2), Gorshkova, Kochetova (7/4), Dmitrieva (1), Akopian (6), Goncharova, Vyakhireva (3), Garanina, Koroleva, Makeeva (1), Marennnikova (3), Shymkute, Bliznova (4), Chernoiivanenko

Germany:

Schülke, Woltering; Zapf, Klein (2), Minevskaja (1), Naidzinavicius (2), Hubinger (5), Althaus (4), Nadgornaja (3), S. Müller (1), Huber (2), Fischer (1), Geschke (2), Wörz (1), Wohlbold, Schulze (2)

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