



2014 WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIP

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE • SAN DIEGO

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO, HOST



[25-4]

Rank: 1 • Seed: 2

Semifinal #2

USC Trojans 12, Stanford Cardinal 11 (SD OT)

Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014 • 3:10 p.m.

Canyonview Aquatic Center • La Jolla, Calif.

Trojans



[24-6]

Rank: 4 • Seed: 3

USC Head Coach Jovan Vavic

General comments on the game:

"This was one of those classic games. Two great teams played very hard water polo from beginning to end. It was a great game to watch. It was not the greatest game to coach, but it was a great game to watch. Both teams were ready to play. The offenses of both teams were excellent in the beginning. Then toward the end, both teams played better defense. In the end, I think we wanted it a little more. I think that Kostas (Genidounias) carried us. A few of our players stepped up, like Mihajlo (Milicevic), Rex (Butler), and our goalie (McQuin Baron) was outstanding. So it was a great team effort."

On the atmosphere at UCSD's Canyonview Aquatic Center for a classic national semifinal:

"I think this is a great place to have the NCAA (Championship). San Diego is a big water polo town. Great high school water polo players come from this town. We have a few on our team, and it's great to be here. The atmosphere was electric. I liked that our band was here. It was a fun game to watch, but it was also a great game for the players to play. It was one of those games we will talk about for years to come."



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USC Senior Driver Kostas Genidounias

On scoring the game-winning goal late in the first sudden-victory overtime period:

"To be honest, I missed two shots earlier, and I just wanted this game to be over. As soon as I shot the ball, I saw it in the net. I turned around and was glad it was over. Our mindset is immediately the next game, UCLA tomorrow. There's no time for celebration. We will try to remain humble and work hard for tomorrow."

On playing Stanford, who won the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) title:

"We wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for Stanford. Stanford beat Long Beach (State in the MPSF final) last week. They could have easily let Long Beach win and play an easier semifinal today, but they did what was ethical, what was right. They won that game, and they won the MPSF tournament. They came here ready to play. We came here ready to play. We lost two times earlier to them. We were the underdogs, but hard work always pays off. Like (head coach) Jovan (Vavic) said, we wanted it a little more."

On whether USC's streak of six straight national titles puts any added pressure on them to keep alive:

"The pressure is not on us. Like (head coach) Jovan (Vavic) has been saying all year, the pressure is not on us. We are the youngest team in this tournament. We have nine freshmen on our squad, with eight of them playing. The pressure is not on us. Jovan has done his job. We've won six in a row. The pressure is on the other teams."

On explaining his experience at the NCAA Championship to his European peers:

"From my experience in Greece, water polo is not the biggest sport over there, but the (NCAA) finals get as much media (exposure) and intense as it gets here. It is funny because earlier today, I had so many of my (Greek) friends text me and message me on Facebook asking me about the game. It is good that many Europeans are moving out here, and Europe is finding out how American water polo is on the rise."

USC Freshman Goalkeeper McQuin Baron

On playing in his first NCAA Championship:

"It was very exciting. It was my first, big NCAA game, obviously, since it's the NCAA tournament. I was very prepared. All the coaches, they do a wonderful job of getting us ready for each game. We know what to expect, so there are really no surprises when we go to the game. So although I was a little nervous, I used it to my advantage."

On whether USC's streak of six straight national titles puts any added pressure on them to keep alive:

"It's not really about the streak. It's just that we want to win. It just happens that there is a streak that comes along with it."



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Stanford Head Coach John Vargas

General comments on the game:

“(USC) did a good job. They did a great job. They scored big goals at big times. Clearly, (Kostas Genidounias), he’s a good, international player, and he came up with big goals at critical times. At the very end of quarters, when they really needed it, he came up with a goal. He did a great job. We had some younger guys in there. I don’t think (the media) realizes it. They talk about (USC) being young. We’re pretty young, too, and our youth showed a little bit at times. I’m proud of the guys’ effort, and I’m sure it was an exciting game for people to watch. So credit to (USC), and obviously I’m really proud of the effort our guys put in.”

On the two goals that Alex Bowen scored in overtime:

“They were clutch shots. Clutch, great stuff that Alex has done all his career. And he’ll continue to do that when he plays on the national team in the Olympics, for sure. That’s Alex. (We’ve come to expect that type of performance from him.”

On there being an incredible atmosphere at UCSD with two big rivals playing a great, tense game:

“Exactly.”



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Stanford Senior Utility Alex Bowen

On his emotions after the semifinal loss:

"There are a lot of feelings going on right now. (This is) probably my lowest point, sadness-wise. Probably my lowest point all across the board. My childhood dream (of winning a national title) was crushed, but I did everything I could."

On the attitude of the team heading into overtime:

"We were calm and confident. We did not see this outcome coming. We thought we could pull it out."

Stanford Sophomore Goalkeeper Drew Holland

On his performance, and the challenges presented by Kostas Genidounias:

"He's a good shooter. I felt like we didn't do a good enough job of communicating and helping over toward him. He burned us for it, especially at the end of regulation there when it felt like we had the win in our hands. He got isolated, got the shot off, and scored. The same thing happened again at the end of the overtime. But, I mean, (this is a) devastating loss."