

Belgium and Germany go for gold at field hockey World Cup

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The final of the field hockey World Cup will have the teams of Belgium and Germany facing each other.

Photo: PL

Havana, January 28 (RHC)-- The teams of Belgium and Germany will fight this Sunday for the gold medal in the final of the 15th men's field hockey World Cup in India.

The veteran golden generation of Belgian players will defend their world crown after a hard-fought 3-2 penalty shootout win over a young Netherlands squad in the semifinals on Friday at the Kalinga Stadium in the heritage city of Bhubaneswar in the state of Odisha.

Reigning Olympic champions and world number two, Belgium beat the Dutch after a 2-2 draw in normal time in a tense semi-final match where experience played a big part, with 11 Belgian players over 30 and three over 35.

The Red Sticks went into the International Hockey Federation's top tournament in good shape with almost all the men who conquered the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the FIH Pro League 2020-21, the 2019 European Championship, the 2018 World Cup and the Olympic silver at Rio de Janeiro 2016.

The goals in the match between Belgium and the Netherlands were scored by striker Tom Alain Boon (27) and Nicolas De Kerpel (45) who put the numbers on the board for the former and a brace from penalty corner expert Jip Janssen (12 and 36) for the latter.

For their part, Germany beat Australia 4-3 in the first semi-final at the same Kalinga Stadium.

The Teutons sensationally came from behind after coming back from the break thanks to a hat-trick from Argentina's Gonzalo Peillat, who played more than 100 games for Los Leones and won Olympic gold at Rio 2016 but now has German nationality.

Peillat got his hat-trick through penalty corners in the 43rd, 52nd and 59th minutes of the match and the decisive goal was scored on a field goal by striker Niklas Wellen (60th), the best player of the match.

Jeremy Hayward (12), Nathan Ephraums (27) and Blake Govers (58) were on target for the Australians.

Germany, two-time world champions in 2002 and 2006, avenged their 1-3 loss to Australia in the semifinals of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Australia and the Netherlands will play in Sunday's bronze medal match at 16:30 local time at the same stadium.

Australia's Jeremy Thomas Hayward leads the Cup scorers with eight goals, followed by Belgium's Tom Alain Boon and the Netherlands' Jip Janssen, both with seven goals, and with six goals are Argentina's Nicolas Enrique Della Torre, France's Victor Charlet, Germany's Niklas Wellen and Australia's Blake Govers.

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