

GB WOMEN SECURE EURO 2012 SPOT WITH FINLAND WIN



Above: Top-scorer Kelsi Fairbrother shoots for GB against Finland on Saturday. Pic: Marek Biernacki.



Lyn Byl and Kathryn Fudge hand out some tough defence, GB style. Pic: Michele Davison.

A SECOND successive victory over Finland at Crystal Palace on Saturday evening gave Great Britain women a spot in the group stages of the 2012 European Championship.

Following Friday's nine-goal win, GB made sure of their passage through to the next stage with a 27-20 win on Saturday.

They will now prepare to take on Russia, Montenegro and Poland home and away in six matches over the next year, and are under no illusions about the challenge ahead.

Emphatic

And leading the plaudits following an emphatic win was Sir Clive Woodward, the British Olympic Association's Elite Performance Director, for whom the GB win was his first taste of live handball and prompted rave reviews afterwards.

"I thought it was fantastic," he said afterwards. "The athleticism and physicality was very impressive and it was a great game to watch.

"Success starts from the top and British Handball really have the leadership and the organisation right and that filters down into the rest of the team."

Meanwhile, Head Coach Jesper Holmris said: "The first



half was fantastic – the best performance we have had so far."

GB led 17-4 at half time, and Holmris added: "Finland played much better than they did in the first leg, but our defence was just amazing and Sarah Hargreaves in goal was awesome in the first half.

"Both Lynn McCafferty and Lyn Byl also played really well, but the whole team played their part."

Kelsi Fairbrother and Lyn Byl were joint top scorers with six goals each, while McCafferty scored five to help reach the group stages which begin with a match against Russia in October.

"Russia and Montenegro are two of the top teams in the world," added Holmris.

"It's a tough group, but it's just a great chance for us to play against those teams."

More pictures from the
GB v Finland matches are
available via
BritishHandball.com

STRONG PERFORMANCE FROM GB MEN IN BRAZIL

GREAT Britain Men gave hosts Brazil a tough match in their opening friendly fixture on Sunday, drawing with them in the closing stages before eventually losing out 32-25 in Sao Paolo.

Nine goals from Chris Mohr helped GB give their hosts a shock, and with just eight minutes remaining the scores were all square at 21-21.

Brazil pulled away to victory in the final few minutes but knew they had been in a tough match, and GB will be looking to secure a win in their remaining two matches over the coming days.

Competitive

Assistant Coach Bill Baillie said afterwards: "It was a good start to the series for us. We were competitive for long periods.

"It was a good all-round performance from the team and a good chance to experience a different style of handball."

As well as Mohr's nine goals, Mark Hawkins and Steven Larsson both scored five, while Nicholas Satchwell in goal had an impressive save ratio of 38 per cent.

GB will play Brazil again on June 7 and June 9 (midnight GMT each day), giving them plenty of chance to try different formations and learn from the experience.

Head Coach Dragan Djukic has virtually a full squad to pick from, and Baillie added: "We're injury free at the moment, with perhaps just one or two little niggles, but nothing serious."

New captain Bob White is in Brazil and is back in action following recovery from hip surgery earlier this year, and Baillie added: "Bob White may see some action later in the week. The main focus is more on Nick Satchwell and Jesper Parker, but Bob will definitely play at some point."

For their part, Brazil are just embarking on a new development programme for their handball side, and are working with a core group of new players rather like GB were a few years ago.

Following their matches against Great Britain, Brazil are also hosting Denmark, Norway and Portugal as they prepare for the Pan American Games in October.

Reports suggest they have three or four injuries in their squad, with those players unlikely to see action against GB as they try to recover in time for Denmark later this month.



GB Men's top-scorer in their first game against Brazil on Monday, Chris Mohr is pictured above passing on his handball tips to members of the public at a special Handball Challenge event at St Pancras International Station in London.



GB goalkeepers Sarah Hargreaves (above) and Jane Mayes (below) pictured at the Handball Challenge event. Pictures: Michele Davison.



CUP FINALS MARK GREAT END TO ENGLISH SEASON

REIGNING champions Great Dane successfully added the EHA Cup crown to their League title at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre on Saturday – but they had to do it the hard way, battling past a determined Ruislip Eagles side.

Seven goals from Kris Olschloe (pictured right) and six from Philips Alton helped Great Dane secure victory in the Cup to add to their league title.

The overall top scorer in the match was Ruislip's Alex Rabinin with ten goals, but it was not enough to deny their London rivals victory.

But it was not all disappointment for Ruislip Eagles.

Earlier in the day their women's team – who secured the league title last week – ensured they have gone through the whole season unbeaten when they beat Olympia 32-22 in the women's EHA Cup final.

Seven goals each from Zsuzi Telek (pictured below) and Dani Sposi – who went on to play for Great Britain in their Finland clash later in the day – underpinned that victory.

And in the Under-18 Boys EHA Cup final, Olympia Cannock won 24-20 against North East Manchester Hawks, with Przemek Bednarczyk scoring eight and Ryan Goodwin six. For the Hawks, Sam Bedlow netted seven times, but it was not enough for victory.

The day's opening match was the Under-18 Girls EHA Cup final, other goals coming from her and North East Manchester team-mates it was not enough for Hawks won 11-8 against the win.

