

IKF Europa Cup

The 35th edition of the IKF Europa Cup for club teams was held from 11-13 January 2020 in Budapest, Hungary. A top-class organised event by the Hungarian Korfbal Association (HKA) and due to the numerous spectators from Hungary, Belgium and the Netherlands, also an event with a great atmosphere.

One of the tightest matches of the tournament was the opening match between Trojans KC (ENG) - SG Pegasus Rommerscheid 1991 e.v. (GER) in Group A. With less than two minutes to go Amy Turner scored to make the score 15-13, putting the English team in the driver's seat. However, just 90 seconds later it was Johanna Peuters who sealed the game for the Germans scoring the decisive goal to make it 15-16. The other match in Group A between 1908 SZAC KSE (HUN) and Kon. Kwik KC (BEL) brought a clear victory for the Belgians, 11-22. Although the Belgians didn't have a walk in the park against the Germans, deciding the game in the last couple of minutes, they deservedly made it through as group winners. SG Pegasus joined them in the semi-finals, leaving the third place for Trojans and the fourth place for the home team.

In Group B the Dutch favourite KV Fortuna (NED) convincingly won all three group matches, leaving NC Benfica (POR) 22-9, KC Barcelona (CAT) 32-10 and Ceské Budejovice (CZE) 31-10, no chance. The big battle for the second place in this group came from the teams from Portugal and Catalonia, a real Iberian derby. For a long time, the score was close, but after Javier Navarro (CAT) made the score 14-15 of it was the Portuguese team that showed to be ready for the semi-finals. Final score 15-21 in favour of NC Benfica. The Catalans won their last game against the Czechs finishing third in the group.

The match of the tournament was the semi-final between NC Benfica and Kon. Kwik KC, a real thriller. In a very intense game, the Belgians were pushed to their limits by the Portuguese team. Especially in the first two quarters Benfica was the better team, resulting in a 7-4 lead at half time. In a nerve-wracking third and fourth quarter the Portuguese kept the initiative for a long time but it was the amazing fighting spirit of the Belgians that brought them back in the game. With just 2.5 minutes to go they were still one goal down 11-10. But goals from Nick Verwerft and Amber Wuyts in the last minutes gave Kwik the ticket to the Final, 11-12. In the other semi-final the Dutch won against the Germans, 22-8.

The last day of the event brought KC Barcelona to the seventh place by defeating Ceské Budejovice with 28-14. 1908 SZAC KSE was very close to surprising Trojans, but at the end, the English got the fifth place by scoring the golden goal, 14-15. For NC Benfica the tournament had a bitter ending. After their painful loss in the semi-finals, they also lost the last game of the tournament against SG Pegasus Rommerscheid 1991 e.v., with just one goal difference, 19-18. leaving the bronze medal to Germany.

In the final between KV Fortuna and Kon. Kwik KC it soon became clear that the Dutch team was just too good. They overwhelmed the Belgians particularly in the first quarter and the half time score of 16-6 left little hope for a turnaround. Although the score gave little excitement in the sold-out venue, a couple of beautiful goals did. Thomas Reijgersberg and Nik van der Steen both scored an amazing goal for Fortuna. But a flying running in shot over the head by Nick Verwerft from Kwik arguably topped those. At the end Fortuna won it 34-18 bringing the Europa Cup back to their home town Delft, 15 years after their last European



title.

