

### **IKF Europa Shield**

The IKF Europa Shield was held from 24-26 January in Germany, in the city of Bergisch Gladbach. The German Federation delegated the organisation to home club TuS Schildingen who did a great job in hosting the event.

Unfortunately for the club, the home team TuS Schildgen e.V. was not able to make it into the semi-finals and go for a medal. In a very tough Group A, they lost two of their three group matches, with the smallest possible difference. The first match of TuS Schildgen was against CK Vallparadis / Assessoria (CAT), who overcame a four goals gap, were behind almost the complete match, but never gave up and finally won it with 15-16. When the Germans also lost their second match against BEC Korfball Club (ENG) with 20-21, the semis were out of sight. They did manage to keep Grupo Desportivo dos bons dias (POR) under them, winning with 17-12. The winner of the Group was BEC, who was able to fight off the Catalans of Vallparadis in a direct confrontation, 15-14. The second place in the group was claimed by Vallparadis who won two out of their three group matches.

In Group B the differences between the teams were a bit bigger and the second participating team of Germany, KV Adler Rauxel, kept hope high for the home country to keep the trophy within the country borders. They convincingly finished first in the group by winning all three matches comfortably: 27-7 against Kocaeli University Sport Club (TUR), 23-5 against KS Defenders Korfball Wroclaw (POL) and 19-14 against Brno KK (CZE). The Czechs joined the Germans in the semi-finals by winning their remaining matches against the Polish and Turkish teams and therefore ending second in the Group. Kocaeli won it in a thrilling match against KS Defenders, 12-11 and therefore ending on the third place above the Polish team.

In the first semi-final of the tournament, the Czechs of Brno KK made the life of BEC Korfball Club very hard. Only in the last five minutes of the game, the English team was able to create a real gap and win it 16-13. In the other semi-final Vallparadis won it surprisingly easily against KV Adler Rauxel. If it was the tension of playing in front of a home crowd or just a bad match is hard to tell, but the final score of 18-12 says it all.

The placing matches of the event brought Grupo Desportivo dos bons dias to the seventh place of the event, beating KS Defenders Korfball Wroclaw 21-7. Fifth was won by TuS Schildgen who had no problems with the Turkish team of Kocaeli; 27-9. In a close bronze medal game, KV Adler Rauxel managed to grab the win against Brno KK by scoring the last two goals of the game: 14-12.

The expectation for the final between BEC Korfball Club and CK Vallparadis / Assessoria was high. These two clubs had already met in the group phase and the teams showed to be competitive. However, starting with an 8-0 run the English team did not leave any doubt 'who's boss'. With a final score of 22-9 BEC won the IKF Europa Shield for the second year in a row. A great achievement.

