

Going for Gold again Interview with Alexey Gumyanov, the Russian head coach

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Russia is the record champion at Women's Junior World Championships by winning eleven of 17 possible titles. After not qualifying for the last WCH in Macedonia 2008 now they're going for Gold again, as Coach Alexey Gumyanov says. His team was surprisingly defeated by Montenegro in the opener, but then clearly beat Mexico and Hongkong. Gumyanov talks about the structure of the Russian women's handball and the reasons for the defeat against Montenegro. Before becoming Russia's junior head coach he coached the top team Lada Togliatti and led them to Russian titles and to the Champions League final. Currently Gumyanov is coach of the Russian first league team Kuban Krasnodar, too.

Your team scored 49 goals against Hong Kong. Was it the objective to score more than 50 goals?

Gumyanov: No, this wasn't our main target. Our objective was to receive less than seven goals and as the final result was 49:7, we nearly reached this objective. But it's always hard to keep the concentration high, when you lead with more than 30 goals.

Four points after three matches – what's your intermediate balance of your performances?

Gumyanov: We came here to win every match and to become World Champion. Now we already lost one match, but still can win the title.

What were the reasons for the defeat against Montenegro?

Gumyanov: We didn't play as a team, what might be a problem of acclimatization, as we had a long and hard trip to Cheonan shortly before the start of the tournament. We didn't have enough time to be on a top level for this match. But from day to day we improve and we're becoming a team.

In the last two matches Russia will play against Angola and Sweden – tougher opponents as Hong Kong and Mexico. How do you rate the chances of your team?

Gumyanov: Both teams are very interesting and well prepared, but we'll do all we can, to win both matches to get a good base for the Main Round.

Is Russia able to become World Champion again?

Gumyanov: Yes, this is our objective, but several other teams want to win the title, too.

What's the secret of success of the Russian Youth and Junior teams at WCHs?

Gumyanov: Very good work is done in the youth programs of clubs like Togliatti, Volgograd, Krasnodar and others. This is a very good and hard school for the young players. Another reason is that those players – in contrast to other countries - get the chance to play in the first league very early, either in those clubs or in farm teams.

Your team is something like the pool for the highly successful Russian women's national team, the World Champion of 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2009. How many of your players will be in the squad for this years women's European Championship?

Gumyanov: Tatiana Khmyrova and Ksenia Makeeva had already been in the women's team that became World Champion in China 2009. In my opinion at least Anna Sen will be in this squad in December. But our women's national coach Jewgeny Trefilow has to decide.