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Olympic Hockey Qualifier Women, Manukau, Auckland

Match 17

Wednesday 24 March 2004

Japan 4 – 0 Korea

Naoko Saito	FG 9m
Sakae Morimoto	PC 15m
	PC 65m
Keiko Miura	PC 41m

Match Summary

Japan's impressive win over Korea gave one of the world's most improved teams a deserved spot in Athens. It will be Japan's first appearance at a women's Olympic hockey competition. In an open and entertaining match, the world No.11 joined Spain as Pool B's second automatic qualifier and upset the pre-tournament rankings that had Korea as favourites to finish in the top two. Japan took the initiative early in the match and two goals before the midway point of the first half never allowed Korea to gain the upper hand or any control. Japan's well-drilled penalty corner battery, with their variety of attacking options, produced a hat trick of goals just as they had done earlier in the tournament against USA.

After finally converting some of their chances in front of the net against Russia yesterday, Korea couldn't repeat that effort and is now in danger of missing the Olympics. They are now forced to go through the playoff matches in an attempt to gain a place in the Athens competition, but must win sudden death matches on Friday and Saturday to snatch the 10th and final spot.

Quotes

"We are very very happy. We didn't expect it. We thought it would be a very hard match. At half time I just said keep going and try to use the width of the field. We still are a developing team. It is a small sport, but now maybe many people will watch it on TV. It is very important us making the Olympics."

Zenjiro Yasuda, JPN Manager

"Today the girls were losing their concentration. Sometimes the girls are very difficult for me. Today they did not make a team and they played totally different to training. Japan were much, much better than us - they played very hard. It was our last chance. But we will try to win next two games. We have a problem with our captain, but she must play."

Kim Sang Ryul, KOR Coach

Stats

3 from 8	Penalty corners	0 from 3
0 from 0	Penalty strokes	0 from 0
1 from 6	Field goal shots	0 from 8

Penalty cards

Rika Komazawa

Green 21m

Seong Eun Kim

Green 57m

Next match

Semi Final v TBA
Friday PM

5-8 Playoff v TBA
Friday AM