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CCU Water Polo alumni represent the USA at the Fina Junior Water Polo World Championships in Prague

Submitted by Orinda resident



Dash McFarland (left) and Brock Zamanian Photo provided

Junior National Team water polo players Brock Zamanian (attacker) and Dash McFarland (center), CCU Water Polo alumni and teammates at UCSB, competed in the Fina Junior Water Polo World Championships in Prague Aug. 28-Sept. 5. The FINA Junior Water Polo World Championships is an international water polo tournament for players age 20 and under that is held every two years in a different country (2019 was in Kuwait) and is nine days long, consisting of one game per day with 8-minute quarters, in a 30-meter pool (versus the 25-meter course that is played in the U.S.). Each country is allowed a roster total of 13 players, 11 field players, and two goalies. Team USA had players from UCSB (Brock and Dash), UCSD, USC, Cal, Long Beach State, and Pepperdine.

The battles in the pool resulted in wins against Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Germany, and losses to Spain, Montenegro, and Serbia. Team USA's final game on Day 9 was a nail-biter against Greece, winning by one goal at 12-11 to take 7th overall.

Being a former Orinda Aquatics swimmer, Zamanian loved the bigger pool and was impressed with the swimming speed of the competition, making it even more challenging to gain the advantage on counter-attacks. "It was the hardest water polo that I have ever played, but I learned a lot and had fun," said Zamanian, who earned the Player of the Match award against the Czech Republic and was Team USA's second-highest goal scorer in the tournament with 11 goals.

As a center, McFarland drew 16 kick-outs (2nd overall for Team USA) while his defenders attempted to steal the ball from him. Over the course of the tournament, it was McFarland's strength and physicality that he could rely on as he faced steep competition. McFarland said, "The defenders were so tough, but it really prepared me for the college season upcoming."

Upon returning home, the focus is now on college water polo and NCAA qualifications.

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