



Denmark v Iran.



Loose ball.

## McCutcheon and Littlewood star but no medal placings

### World Championships

The opening day of the world championships in Deqing saw the top three nations in the U21 men's and women's categories start with wins.

Men's world number one, Spain, got the better of Lithuania 7-2 in their opener with Jose Luis Aguilar smashing in four goals.

Despite the scoreline, the first half saw Lithuania defend well and concede only two goals.

However, the mood changed in the second half with the Spaniards turning on the style. The defending champions faced Belgium next and won the game 5-2.

Johannes Foerster joined Aguilar on the four goal bandwagon, helping Germany breeze past Japan 11-2 before beating Switzerland 3-1.

A Paolo Messina brace was enough for the Italian men to triumph over world number 14, the Netherlands. They won 6-3 and added to the result with a massive 9-4 victory over Chinese Taipei.

In the second half, however, the Italians lost focus at the back, allowing Ruo-Chi Sun and skipper Tien-Yang Sung to score three goals with six minutes remaining.

Back after missing out on the last edition in Saint-Omer, Australia failed to win in their opening fixtures.

However, the Aussies were involved in entertaining draws in both categories against teams ranked above them.

The men's team drew 5-5 against Chinese Taipei while the women's team finished 3-3 against Great Britain.

France, Germany and Spain women all showed their class in the morning session, registering massive wins with many double digit scores.

Spain got the biggest win of the day, brushing past debutants Thailand 18-1. Ines Arosa Soto, Valentina Nogueira and Carmen Almela Isach all scored hat tricks.

Raquel Calvente Reboll was the star of the show, scoring five past a helpless Thai side.

Defending champions New Zealand had it easy against fierce rivals Australia and Singapore, winning 8-2 before edging Great Britain 4-3.

Hannah Hunt and Ellery Nielsen scored three goals each for the Kiwis on the first day.

The second day of the tournament would see the senior men's and women's teams begin their campaigns.

The Germans would be favourites in both categories.

Poland's men's team beat a higher ranked Great Britain side to take control of Group D as action continued.

The focus shifted towards the senior men's and women's matches as they began their journey to seal a spot at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu.

Defending champions and world number one, Germany, made it two wins from two in the men's Group A, getting the better of Belgium 5-2 before beating Japan 6-2.

Captain Jonas Vieren, Aren Beckmann, Lennart Unterfeld and Rene Kirchoff all found the back of the net in both games.

The Poles took pole position in Group D after an easy 5-2 victory over Australia before the tenth ranked nation upset world number four, Great Britain.

A first half hat trick from British captain Suryan McCutcheon suggested it was going to be a routine win until Jan and Juliusz Bulira combined to stage a comeback for the ages and beat them 5-4.

As expected, world number three, Italy, took on Malaysia and Chinese



Taipei in Group C, winning both fixtures, 6-1 and 4-0 respectively.

Spain scored eight past Sweden to put their Super Cup woes behind them. Ranked second in the world, they set the pace in Group B with a 4-1 win over New Zealand.

Denmark, ranked fifth in Group E and sixth placed France in Group F also won both their games of the day.

France's second win against seventh ranked Portugal was impressive. They scored four goals in the first half, including a brace from captain David Linet, and delivered a composed defensive performance to come out on top, 5-2.

Great Britain women showed their intent and followed the path of their Spanish U21 counterparts from day one, taking the honour for the biggest win of the day.

They scored a whopping 25 goals and conceded 0 against China, including a sensational seven goal performance from Bethan Littlewood.

Katie Howes and Georgina Longbottom scored three each, Sara Lanao-Madden bagged four and Eleanor Mcbay smashed in five past the hosts.

The Germans, however, humbled the Brits later in the day, scoring eight past them to make up for the Super Cup loss and reassert their dominance.

The Spanish women's team continued their winning streak from the Super Cup the previous week to register a comfortable 11-1 win over Hong Kong. Neith Natalia Leon Martin scored four in the game.

The first group phase of the U21 tournament finished with no big surprises for the day but one.

World number one, Spain, was handed a reality check by the Danes, who beat them 4-2. Carl-Christian Palmquist Dahl scored to give Denmark the lead in what was an end to end game.

Jose Luis Aguilar equalized but a Viggo Willumsen brace secured the points for Denmark. The win helped them top Group A and qualified along with Spain and Belgium.

Germany, New Zealand and Switzerland were through from Group B, Italy, Great Britain and the Netherlands from Group C and France, Poland and Portugal from Group D.

Among U21 women, Germany, France and the Netherlands from Group A and New Zealand, Spain and Great Britain from Group B had all secured qualification.

Spain and Italy were handed blows in their quest for semi finals among men while the Dutch women came out on top against France.



Australia.