

NO 2022 WORLD CUP FOR GREEK MEN

Following a loss to Spain on November 11 in Athens, the 2022 Qatar World Cup dreams of the Greek men were dashed. Needing two wins in their final two matches against Spain and Kosovo, respectively, a 25th-minute hand ball penalty kick by Pablo Sarabia gave the Spaniards a 1-0 lead, which was all they would need. Greece was lethargic and dominated by Spain, as evidenced by Spain's 73% ball control. Spain proceeded to knock off Sweden three days later to win the group, though both teams had already qualified. Greece hosted Kosovo in both teams' finales and the Greeks played well, but had to settle for a 1-1 draw in Athens. Greece has yet to qualify for the World Cup since reaching the Round of 16 in 2014.

GREEK WOMEN START 2-0 IN EUROBASKET QUALIFYING

Greece's women are off to a hot start in qualifying for EuroBasket Women 2023. The tournament has two hosts, Slovenia and Israel, and will be played in four different cities next year. In their opener on November 11, Greece knocked off Great Britain 73-66 in Manchester as point guard Angeliki Nikolopoulou and power forward Artemis Spanou led five Greeks in double figures with 17 points each. Nikolopoulou hit on four of her five attempts from three-point range and led the world's #15 ranked Greeks, who got some stellar defense inside and physically dominated Great Britain.



Three days later, back home in Xanthi, Greece jumped out to a 35-19 halftime lead and cruised to a 64-57 victory over Portugal. Behind center Maria Fasoula's 18 points and 12 rebounds and Artemis Spanou's 10 and 10, Greece let down their guard and the Portuguese women got a little close down the stretch, but once again the Greeks dominated the paint.

This year's team is playing without superstar Elena Bosgana, who is in her Freshman year on the Stanford University basketball team in Palo Alto, California. Bosgana, who I wrote about last year, is not playing much in the early portion of the season, but that's because she's on a team that is loaded with five-star talent, are defending National Champions, and are currently ranked #7 in the country. While she is still learning not only the American way but the Stanford way, as well, I expect Bosgana to play more as the season wears on and she should be in higher rotation next season.

As for EuroBasket Women 2023, there are 38 teams in 10 groups attempting to qualify. The winners of all 10 groups automatically qualify, as do the four best teams that did not win their groups. Slovenia and Israel are automatic qualifiers as host nations. The next two contests for Greece are November 24 vs. Estonia and November 27 vs. Great Britain. Both games will be played in Greece before all nations take two months off and finish qualifying in February.

STONIE'S SPORTS HANDICAPPING

If you have been following my handicapping videos every Friday, you'll know that last week was only the third losing week I've had out of 11 to start the season. NCAA football continues to be up and down (55%) and with only two weeks left in the regular season before conference championships, a couple of big weeks wouldn't hurt. Bowl season is right around the corner in December and not only do lines get tighter, but mostly everyone loses during Bowl Season because of the uncertainty of whether or not schools are motivated to play. NFL Football just passed the halfway point of the season and I've been scorching hot at over 61% on the season. The good news is that NCAA basketball began last week and there will be games nightly from now until the first Monday in April. [Here's the link](#) to last Friday's video, and you can always subscribe to be notified of a video every time it gets posted. With Thanksgiving coming this week, a new video will be posted on Wednesday night. GOODLUCK2YA!

—Stonie