

**FIBA**

We Are Basketball

1 A NEW DYNASTY

1.1 AUSTRALIA WINS FIRST TITLE

Since the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta the USA has dominated women's basketball, and, over the past ten years, no one has come even close to challenging them for the Gold medal at top international competitions.

During the first phase of the FIBA World Championship for Women in Sao Paulo, this story seemed to be continuing. But that impression only lasted until the Semi-final game, where the USA lost 75 – 68 against Russia. That loss halted the USA's FIBA World Championship winning streak, which dated back to the 1994 World Championship bronze medal game, at 26 games and the USA's total string of victories ended at 50 including both the Olympic Games and FIBA World Championships.

Australia's women clinched their first world title on the 23rd of September with a comfortable 91-74 victory over Russia. Just when Igor Grudin's players believed that they had cleared their biggest hurdle with their semi-final upset of the United States, they ran into the green and gold Opals from Down Under.

Beaten finalists (to the USA) at the last two Olympic Games, the Opals travelled to Brazil determined to win Gold and they accomplished the feat in style against Russia with Penny Taylor exploding for 28 points. Australia's glorious run at the FIBA Women Championship for Women had a little bit of everything.

They started with a win after a forfeit by Lithuania, who had trouble gaining entry to Brazil from French Guyana, and the Opals survived close calls against Spain in the second group stage and Brazil in the semi-final before achieving the ultimate goal of capturing Gold with a surprisingly easy 17-point triumph over Russia.

Taylor was sensational from start to finish in Brazil and her performances in the last two games made her the obvious choice for the tournament's Most Valuable Player award.

After their very disappointing loss to Russia, the USA team demolished Brazil with a ruthless display to secure the Bronze medal at the FIBA World Championship for Women. Diana Taurasi led the way with 28 points, including 10 of the Americans first 14 points.

Taurasi, who played on the USA's Gold medal winning side at the Olympics two years ago, ended up making six of seven shots from three-point range in the contest while the Americans were 11 of 20 as a team.

It was a major letdown for Brazil, who had led Australia by four points early in the fourth quarter of their semi-final. Hopes were high at that point of a Gold medal but instead, they finished with nothing. Janeth, who played on their Gold medal winning side in 1994, paced the Brazilians with 16 points.

The championship final was televised live in over 60 countries and there were in total over 100 countries who broadcast the games from Brazil. 200 journalists from over 30 countries covered the event on-site.



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1.2 FINAL STANDINGS

1. Australia
2. Russia
3. USA
4. Brazil
5. France
6. Lithuania
7. Czech Republic
8. Spain
9. Argentina
10. Canada
11. Cuba
12. China
13. Korea
14. Chinese Taipei
15. Senegal
16. Nigeria