

SPURS DRAFT PICK GUARD HITS GAME WINNER FOR FRANCE AT BUZZER

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It was Spurs draft pick Nando Decolo, who hit the buzzer beater versus Greece and not Spurs star guard Tony Parker, on a fadeaway, turnaround jumper to give France a 71-69 victory and 1st place in Group E of the qualifying round. France used mostly a European lineup and not the household known names that play in the NBA, such as Tony Parker, Ronny Turiaf, Boris Diaw and Nicolas Batum. Athletic Euroleague forward Alain Koffi, who last year played for LeMans, battled down in the paint against larger men, Ioannis Bourousis and Baby Shaq Shortianitis, as Koffi scored a game high 14 points for France to go along with 6 rebounds. French head coach Vincent Collett had veteran French league point guard Aymeric Jeanneau and 20 yr. old youngster Antoine Diot of Lemans, running the point and letting Tony Parker rest his legs for the knock-out stage of the tournament. With Parker on the bench for the last possession, it was 22 yr. old French league MVP, Nando DeColo who took and made the big shot. The French were just quicker to loose balls in the 1st half and used athletic wing guard Yannick Bokolo (who reminds me of a poor man's Leandro Barbosa), to fly up the court for fastbreak layups and he also hit a big 3, late in the game as Greece made their comeback. The Greeks main problem in their 2 straight loses is they miss Dimitrios Diamantidis who hit clutch 3's in past tournaments and they are missing their main creator, Theo Papaloukas who lives for these big game situations. Theo ,just would get Bourousis and Baby Shaq easy dunks, and Zisis along with Fotsis would have that extra millisecond to size up their 3's. Spanoulis is more of a shake you off the dribble creator, that looks to score 1st and sometimes get's caught in the air for turnovers. Greece needs Zisis (0-3) and Fotsis (1-7) both to hit from 3 point range or else Spanoulis is asked to do too much with the ball. Spanoulis did all he could to keep Greece alive, hitting four 3's for the game and 2 clutch ones in the last minutes of the game to tie it up at 69 , as Ronny Turiaf played the last Greek possession like Jameer Nelson did in the NBA finals against Derrick Fisher, not closing out on the 3 point line at Spanoulis. France won the game but for their victory they get a hot shooting Spanish team as the 1-4 matchup and Greece plays their rivals on the court as well as in politics ,Turkey as the 2-3 matchup. This young Greek squad got their best match-up ,as Spain has had great success against Greece in recent history and Slovenia has a more veteran and deeper team. So one more win against Turkey, and Greece makes next years World championships ,with a B team just like Argentina did in Puerto Rico 2 weeks ago. The other 1-4 matchup is Slovenia and Croatia and the other 2-3 game is Russia vs. Serbia led by emerging star point guard Milos Teodosic.