30 October 2016

Abu Dhabi Grand Slam 2016, United Arab Emirates – DAY THREE

France top the medal table ahead of the Netherlands in Abu Dhabi

The Abu Dhabi Grand Slam 2016, the fourth and penultimate Grand Slam of the season, produced a pulse-raising final day as the ippons flowed at the IPIC Arena in the Emirates.

The U.A.E’s premier annual sports event came to an explosive finale the with heavyweights as the women’s -78kg and +78kg categories and the men’s -90kg, -100kg and +100kg categories all featured on the last day of competition.

France finished top of the medal table with three gold medals from their women ahead of the Netherlands who won two gold medals while Brazil finished third with one gold medal. Click here for the full medal table.

Judo’s finest athletes will now move on to Asia for the final Grand Prix of the year in China as 176 judoka from 18 nations will compete from 18 – 20 November in Qingdao. Hosts China, who won their first men’s Olympic judo medal at Rio 2016, will field a full strength team of 56 judoka while Japan, Mongolia and South Korea will also be there in high numbers.

Watch **#JudoQingdao2016**, the final Grand Prix of the IJF World Judo Tour 2016, live and free at [www.ippon.tv](http://www.ippon.tv)

**Women
-78kg: Steely STEENHUIS records fourth Grand Slam victory**

European Championships silver medallist Guusje STEENHUIS (NED) recorded her fourth Grand Slam victory with a gritty display in Abu Dhabi. STEENHUIS has now won seven medals in a row as she has left no doubt over who is the Netherlands’ top -78kg judoka having missed out on Rio 2016 to Marhinde VERKERK. On her Grand Slam debut Junior European Championships winner Anna Maria WAGNER (GER) showed her untapped potential at the highest level as she only lost to STEENHUIS who took silver at the Zagreb Grand Prix last time out in September. The Dutch star scored a yuko from an ouchi-gari in a professional performance even if she was disappointed to only win by that slender margin.

In the first semi-final STEENHUIS could not break the stubborn resistance of Zagreb Grand Prix bronze medallist Sama Hawa CAMARA (FRA). The young Frenchwoman was penalised twice while STEENHUIS was only reprimanded once and safely advanced into the gold medal contest.

In the second semi-final Samsun Grand Prix winner Madeleine MALONGA (FRA) lost to WAGNER on shido penalties. The French fighter was penalised three times while her German opponent posted an unblemished record to book a fascinating final against STEENHUIS.

The first bronze medal was won by Tallinn European Open silver medallist Samanta SOARES (BRA) who beat MALONGA who knew that his was a contest that she should have won. The athletic Frenchwoman was penalised twice while former Rio Grand Slam silver medallist SOARES was penalised once. The contest lacked rhythm and attacking intent from both judoka as the shidos determined the winner and provided one more medal for Brazil.

The second bronze medal contest was won by former Junior European Championships winner Anastasiya TURCHYN (UKR) who prevailed against CAMARA by a single shido as both bronze medals surprisingly escaped the clutches of the French women’s team who had thrived on day one and two.

**Final**WAGNER, Anna Maria (GER) vs STEENHUIS, Guusje (NED)

**Bronze Medal Fights**MALONGA, Madeleine (FRA) vs SOARES, Samanta (BRA)
TURCHYN, Anastasiya (UKR) vs CAMARA, Sama Hawa (FRA)

**Final Results**

1. STEENHUIS, Guusje (NED)
2. WAGNER, Anna Maria (GER)
3. SOARES, Samanta (BRA)
3. TURCHYN, Anastasiya (UKR)
5. MALONGA, Madeleine (FRA)
5. CAMARA, Sama Hawa (FRA)
7. ROSE, Brigitte (SEY)
7. APOTEKAR, Klara (SLO)

**+78kg: ALTHEMAN inks fourth Grand Slam prize after Rio 2016 anguish**

Rio 2016 Olympian Maria Suelen ALTHEMAN (BRA) bounced back from her glum Games experience by topping an IJF Grand Slam medal podium for the fourth time on Sunday. Double world silver medallist ALTHEMAN, who finished fifth at the London 2012 Olympic Games and lost her opening contest at Rio 2016, opposed Budapest Grand Prix winner Carolin WEISS (GER) who lacked confidence at the final hurdle as gold again escaped her on the Grand Slam stage. A harai-makikomi gave the Brazilian a waza-ari and WEISS was beaten on the ground as the immovable South American pinned her down for 15 seconds and wazari-awasette-ippon.

In the first semi-final WEISS threw former Baku Grand Slam silver medallist Santa PAKENYTE (LTU) with a thunderous hip throw for the maximum score while in the second semi-final ALTHEMAN subdued Tashkent Grand Prix silver medallist Maryna SLUTSKAYA (BLR) on the ground. The Brazilian submitted her opponent with shime-waza, which is not so common in heavyweight women’s judo, via a sode-guruma-jime.

The first bronze medal was won by SLUTSKAYA who saw off Budapest Grand Prix bronze medallist Iryna KINDZERSKA (UKR) with a sode-tsurikomi-goshi for a yuko score. The Belarus judoka vanished under the Ukrainian to throw her for the smallest score and KINDZERSKA needed to chase the contest but instead toiled and was penalised for passivity before SLUTSKAYA was penalised for dropping in the closing seconds.

The second bronze medal was won by PAKENYTE who defeated former Junior World Championships bronze medallist Yelyzaveta KALANINA (UKR) to capture her second Grand Slam bronze medal. PAKENYTE rushed in front with a yuko from a harai-makikomi and dropped into osaekomi for 20 seconds and ippon.

**Final**ALTHEMAN, Maria Suelen (BRA) vs WEISS, Carolin (GER)

**Bronze Medal Fights**SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR) vs KINDZERSKA, Iryna (UKR)
PAKENYTE, Santa (LTU) vs KALANINA, Yelyzaveta (UKR)

**Final Results**

1. ALTHEMAN, Maria Suelen (BRA)
2. WEISS, Carolin (GER)
3. SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR)
3. PAKENYTE, Santa (LTU)
5. KINDZERSKA, Iryna (UKR)
5. KALANINA, Yelyzaveta (UKR)
7. KARA, Kubra (TUR)
7.

**-90kg: Top seed KUKOLJ triumphs as Serbia dominates the category**Baku Grand Slam silver medallist Aleksandar KUKOLJ (SRB) turned his top seed status into the top prize in Abu Dhabi as Serbia won half of the -90kg medals on offer. KUKOLJ, 25, posted a new personal best as he defeated Almaty Grand Prix winner Axel CLERGET (FRA) in the first gold medal contest in Sunday’s final block. The two vastly-underrated judoka were separated by a waza-ari for KUKOLJ from a tani-otoshi before the Serbian trapped down his French opponent with a kesa-gatame before eventually settling into a mune-gatame for 15 seconds and the gold medal.

In the first semi-final Baku Grand Slam silver medallist Aleksandar KUKOLJ (SRB) defeated Glasgow European Open winner Max STEWART (GBR) by ippon in a one-sided contest as the Serbian was on form to confirm his place in the gold medal contest.

In the second semi-final the skilful CLERGET defeated former Tashkent Grand Prix bronze medallist Hannes CONRAD (GER). Neither man backed down an inch in the battle for grips as the Frenchman won a hard-fought contest by scoring a yuko and trapping his German rival in a kuzure-kesa-gatame hold for 20 seconds.

The first bronze medal was awarded to 2012 Baku Grand Prix winner Tural SAFGULIYEV (AZE) who won the opening contest of the final block against CONRAD. The Azeri broke the deadlock with a yuko from an ippon seoi-nage - with half of the contest gone - which IJF Hall of Famer YAMASHITA Yasuhiro even applauded in the front row. SAFGULIYEV was penalised with a shido for going out but had already done enough to narrowly capture his first Grand Slam medal.

The second bronze medal went to 20-year-old Junior European Championships winner Nemanja MAJDOV (SRB) who defeated STEWART. MAJDOV, who moved up from -81kg to -90kg at the Zagreb Grand Prix in September, showed that decision and timing was inspired as he won the first Grand Slam medal of his career at his first attempt in his new weight. The Serbian fighter scored a yuko with 47 seconds remaining as he countered the ashi-waza of STEWART and that score separated the young talents after five minutes.

**Final**KUKOLJ, Aleksandar (SRB) vs CLERGET, Axel (FRA)

**Bronze Medal Fights**CONRAD, Hannes (GER) vs SAFGULIYEV, Tural (AZE)
STEWART, Max (GBR) vs MAJDOV, Nemanja (SRB)

**Final Results**

1. KUKOLJ, Aleksandar (SRB)
2. CLERGET, Axel (FRA)
3. SAFGULIYEV, Tural (AZE)
3. MAJDOV, Nemanja (SRB)
5. CONRAD, Hannes (GER) .
5. STEWART, Max (GBR)
7. BETTONI, Eduardo (BRA)
7. KLAMMERT, David (CZE)

**-100kg: MAMMADOV rolls back the years for Azerbaijan gold**Elkhan MAMMADOV (AZE) won a battle of attrition and battle of former world champions against Luciano CORREA (BRA) as Azerbaijan struck gold. MAMMADOV, 34, was his country’s leading supporter at the Olympic Games as he was the most animated man in the building when his teammate Elmar GASIMOV took -100kg silver, and showed that he still has the quality and desire to compete at the top level. CORREA, 33, was a surprise entry but more than justified his flight ticket as he held nothing back and will return home with his first Grand Slam medal since bronze in Moscow in 2013. The -100kg final went down to shido penalties as a second shido for the Brazilian was one more than his opponent and Azeri MAMMADOV who was overjoyed to reignite his career in Abu Dhabi.

In the first semi-final MAMMADOV dismissed 22-year-old former Tashkent Grand Prix silver medallist Zlatko KUMRIC (CRO) by the margin of a waza-ari and yuko while in the second semi-final Zagreb Grand Prix bronze medallist Joakim DVARBY (SWE) succumbed to CORREA after 38 seconds of golden score as the Swede was penalised for stepping out.

The first bronze medal was won by DVARBY who made it two medals from two IJF events up in his new weight category. The Swede moved up from -90kg to -100kg in September and after bronze at the Zagreb Grand Prix was able to defeat 23-year-old Aibek SERIKBAYEV (KAZ) who was appearing in the final block on the IJF World Judo Tour for the first time in his career. DVARBY charged ahead with a waza-ari before pinning his opponent in osaekomi with a mune-gatame for 15 seconds and wazari-awasette-ippon.

The second bronze medal was won by Budapest Grand Prix bronze medallist Philip AWITI-ALCARAZ (GBR) as the Enfield Judo Club product bowed on and off as KUMRIC of Croatia could not compete due to injury.
**Final**CORREA, Luciano (BRA) vs MAMMADOV, Elkhan (AZE)

**Bronze Medal Fights**DVARBY, Joakim (SWE) vs SERIKBAYEV, Aibek (KAZ)
KUMRIC, Zlatko (CRO) vs AWITI-ALCARAZ, Philip (GBR)

**Final Results**

1. MAMMADOV, Elkhan (AZE)
2. CORREA, Luciano (BRA)
3. DVARBY, Joakim (SWE)
3. AWITI-ALCARAZ, Philip (GBR)
5. SERIKBAYEV, Aibek (KAZ)
5. KUMRIC, Zlatko (CRO)
7. SHUKUROV, Jalil (AZE)
7. AWITI-ALCARAZ, Philip (GBR)

**+100kg: Abu Dhabi expert NATEA doubles his Grand Slam gold medal tally**
World Judo Masters winner Daniel NATEA (ROU) has now won both of his Grand Slam gold medals in Abu Dhabi after a workman-like win over Tashkent Grand Prix bronze medallist Aliaksandr VAKHAVIAK (BLR) in the heavyweight men’s final. NATEA was in devastating form in the preliminaries with a host of ippons worthy of the highlight reel treatment as he has become the leading heavyweight who is active on the tour post-Rio 2016. A yuko from a ko-soto attack put the heaviest man in the category ahead after only 30 seconds and a waza-ari almost put the rampant Romanian out of sight. VAKHAVIAK, to his credit, did not concede again as he frustrated NATEA in the closing minute as many spectators anticipated an ippon finish but the Belarus fighter held up the latter to take silver with dignity.

In the first semi-final NATEA launched former Tyumen Grand Slam bronze medallist Soslan BOSTANOV (RUS) with an uchi-mata for a truly heavyweight ippon which was heard across the Emirates.

In the second semi-final Tyumen Grand Slam bronze medallist Anton BRACHEV (RUS) was beaten by Aliaksandr VAKHAVIAK (BLR) with a picturesque sasae-tsurikomi-ashi for ippon.

The first bronze medal went to former Ulaanbaatar Grand Prix winner Michal HORAK (CZE) who countered a ura-nage attempt from BRACHEV with a ko-uchi-gari for a waza-ari score. HORAK helped himself to his first career Grand Slam honours to the delight of his Czech teammates and after absorbing this result will have to think about his next move as his teammate and -100kg Olympic champion Lukas KRPALEK (CZE) is expected to make the leap up to the heavyweight division.

The second bronze medal went to Baku Grand Slam bronze medallist David MOURA (BRA) who held down BOSTANOV for 20 seconds and ippon. MOURA, who was a spectator in Rio as he saw Rafael SILVA (BRA) win his second Olympic bronze medal, turned over the Russian in ne-waza and was not going to be prised away from the upper body of his opponent.

**Final**VAKHAVIAK, Aliaksandr (BLR) vs NATEA, Daniel (ROU)

**Bronze Medal Fights**
BRACHEV, Anton (RUS) vs HORAK, Michal (CZE)
MOURA, David (BRA) vs BOSTANOV, Soslan (RUS)

**Final Results**

1. NATEA, Daniel (ROU)
2. VAKHAVIAK, Aliaksandr (BLR)
3. HORAK, Michal (CZE)
3. MOURA, David (BRA)
5. BRACHEV, Anton (RUS)
5. BOSTANOV, Soslan (RUS)
7. SILVA, Joao Cesarino (BRA)
7. ZALAGH, Nabil (FRA)

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