**SUMPTIOUS DAY FOR KOSOVO AND KAZAKHSTAN**

**Antalya Grand Prix - DAY 1**

**Kosovo and Kazakhstan 2 gold medals, Russia 1 gold medal**

*The first day of competition at the Antalya Grand Prix 2017 in Turkey produced some amazing judo and great champions as Kosovo collected two gold medals (Distria KRASNIQI in -52kg and Nora GJAKOVA in -57kg) even if Mijlinda Kelmendi, the Olympic Champion, was not present. Kazakhstan also had an amazing day with two gold medals, one with Gusman KYRGYZBAYEV in the men’s category (-60kg) and one in the women’s division with Otgontsetseg GALBADRAKH (-48kg), the last title going to Russia and Abdula ABDULZHALILOV in -66kg.*

Mr. Marius Vizer, President of the International Judo Federation, was present today in Antalya on the occasion of the first day of the Grand Prix. A good opportunity for him to draw some first comments about the event and judo in the region: “It is a really good organisation. That is important for the world of judo and it gives a real added value for the tourism, the culture and the sport in the country as well as in the whole region.

"This Grand Prix is a very good promotion for judo. I want to congratulate the new President and his team. They achieved a lot to make this event happen.

"I also want to underline the quality of the public. This is important for judo. Turkish people love our sport. The public is young, dynamic and enthusiastic.“

**ANTALYA SPOR SALONU: THE MODERNITY**

For the very first time, an international event of the scale of the Grand Prix is held in the beautiful Antalya Arena Spor Salonu. Home of the Antalyaspor, the construction of the hall started in 2008 and was completed in September 2016. With a capacity of 10,000 seats, the venue usually welcomes team sports such as basketball and volleyball, which are very popular in Turkey. Located nearby the Antalya Arena Stadium and a few kilometers aways from the old city, the Arena Spor Salonu is ideally surrounded by all the accommodation facilities that help to organize major international events.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**JUDO DICTIONNARY**

Regularly you will find here some explanations about judo, its rules and its terminology.

The ultimate goal of judo is simple: to score IPPON, either by throwing your opponent on his/her back or by winning on the floor with a ground technique. As judo was born in Japan in 1882, invented by Professor Jigoro Kano, the terminology used in Judo is still today in Japanese.

REI: When the referee announces REI, the two athletes have to bow to each other to show their respect and to acknowledge that they will participate according to the rules of judo and its moral code.

HAJIME: Announced by the referee at the beginning of the contest and every time the two athletes can start again. By extension it is also used during the training session to start an exercice.

MATTE: Announced by the referee to stop the bout. Hajime and Matte are always associated. When MATTE is announced, the athletes come back to their initial position. At the end of the contest, the referee announces MATTE SORE MADE, to put a final end to the match.

SONO MAMA: In specific situation (groundwork), the referee can announce SONO MAMA and the two athletes have to freeze in their position. It can happen when the JUDOGI (the judoka outfit) is over the head for instance. After the head is released, the referee announces YOSHI: start again.

In the next DID YOU KNOW, we will explain the different scores of judo.

**HE CARRIES JUDO GENES**

Batuhan Efemgil is a 24 year old judoka from Turkey, who will participate in two days in his 9th Grand Prix in the men’s -90kg weight category. If so far, the young athlete was not successful in stepping on a podium of an World Judo Tour event, he is targeting the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and is dream is still alive.

Explaining that he carries judo genes, Batuhan Efemgil explained: “Judo is my father’s occupation. He had a successful career and introduced me to the sport when I was only 8 months old. I grew up with my dad doing judo and being successful. My father is my coach in life and on the tatami and I want to bring his successes to a higher level.

Batuhan Efemgil also explained how the new Turkish Judo Federation president, Mr. Sezer Huysuz, can have a positive impact on his judo career: “An athlete, who attended the Olympic Games twice, becoming our President, gives energy and confidence to me and to my teammates. He provides the necessary atmosphere with his experience and energy. Sezer Huysuz was my teammate and he was like an older brother. I am proud of him being the President.“

Batuhan Efemgil’s near future is in Antalya this weekend, but seeing a little bit further the young athlete declared: “I couldn’t really achieved my goals so far due to some injuries. But last february in Portugal, I could win four matches and I lost two. We just had a long training camp in Tokyo and now we are focussing on the European Championships, the Islamic Solidarity Games and of course the World Championships in Budapest this summer. But our main objectif is definitely the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020. We want to make history in Japan, the motherland of judo.“

**-48kg: GALBADRAKH GIVES NO CHANCE TO THE CONCURRENCE**

It was no surprise that Otgontsetseg GALBADRAKH (KAZ) qualified for the final in the -48kg category. Third in the world ranking, the one who began her career with the Mongolian team, is now well placed in the top of the world ranking under the banner of Kazakhstan (since 2015), especially since her magnificent bronze medal at the last Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Several times a gold medalist at world circuit events, she once again confirmed that she is one of the safe bets of the category. She was joined in the final by Shira RISHONY (ISR) who occupied the second top seed of the draw. Third in the Baku Grand Slam a few weeks ago, the Israeli relied on a first-round victory over Fjolla Kelmendi, cousin of Majlinda, who won the first Olympic title in history for Kosovo in Rio.

Driton Kuka, the coach of the Olympic champion, explained: "Majlinda and Fjolla's fathers are brothers and they both started judo at the same time. I must say that as a coach, I was impressed by Fjolla when she was young. She was very talented. But she had to stop for a while because of her studying. She is now coming back to the sport."

There is undoubtedly something ‘Kelmendi’ in the judo of Fjolla. This did not pay off in Antalya, but it would not be surprising to see her again in the upcoming months. To be continued…

In the final, the first important moment, was when both athletes GALBADRAKH and RISHONY where penalised with a first shido as they were too passive and did not try to build positive judo. But that’s the moment GALBADRAKH chose to show her impressive talent as she counterattacked RISHONY’s technique and propelled her in the air, but for no score. RISHONY received a second shido before the Kazakh could score a first waza-ari with lightning sumi-gaeshi. With 17 seconds left on the clock, the mission seemed impossible for the Israeli and GALBADRAKH aded a new line to her already long prize list.

The first medal contest saw Maria SIDEROT (POR), 5th last week in Tbilisi, and the bronze medallist of the last Baku Grand Slam, Noa MINSKER (ISR) facing for a place on the podium. A first shido was awarded to MINSKER, just before she scored a beautiful waza-ari with a drop-seoi-nage technique. With a second shido given to the Israeli, the situation started to be a little critical as a third penalty would mean disqualification despite the waza-ari but ultimately MINSKER could contain SIDEROT’s assaults and win her third bronze medal on the occasion of a Grand Prix.

In the second bronze medal bout, Aisha GURBANLI (AZE) was opposed to Sabina GILIAZOVA (RUS). With a drop-morose-seoi-nage, GURBANLI scored the first waza-ari of the contest on the edge of the competition area. But GILIAZOVA evened the score a few seconds later. Both athletes then successively tried to score to take the lead of a very dynamic bout and after a failed attempt from GURBANLI, GILIAZOVA could conclude on the floor with a shime-waza technique for ippon.

**Final**

GALBADRAKH, Otgontsetseg (KAZ) vs. RISHONY, Shira (ISR)

**Bronze medal contests**

SIDEROT, Maria (POR) vs. MINSKER, Noa (ISR)

GURBANLI, Aisha (AZE) vs. GILIAZOVA, Sabina (RUS)

**Final Results**

1. GALBADRAKH, Otgontsetseg (KAZ)

2. RISHONY, Shira (ISR)

3. GILIAZOVA, Sabina (RUS)

3. MINSKER, Noa (ISR)

5. GURBANLI, Aisha (AZE)

5. SIDEROT, Maria (POR)

7. KELMENDI, Fjolla (KOS)

7. SENTURK, Gulkader (TUR)

**-52kg: CONFIDENT KRASNIQI IN GOLD**

If Fjolla Kelmendi was not successful in -48kg, her compatriot Distria KRASNIQI, reached the final after clear victories during the elimination phases. Junior World Champion in 2015 and training partner of the Kosovan Olympic champion Majlinda KELMENDI, KRASNIQI did not spend much time on the tatami as she successively eliminated Ariel BEZALEL (ISR) and Merve TAS (TUR) by ippon, the palm of the quicker movement being attributed to KRASNIQI for having thrown TAS for ippon in just 10 seconds.

Gili COHEN, winner of the 2016 Baku Grand Slam, and number one seeded competitor of the day, also confirmed the good form of the Israeli judo team by pushing the door of the final. After a first-round win by a waza-ari against Nazakat AZIZOVA (AZE), COHEN eliminated Diyora KELDIYOROVA (UZB) in the semi-final with a clear ippon.

In less than a minute, KRASNIQI had already scored a waza-ari after she blocked one of COHEN’s attacks and countered her. She then scored again with a sasae-tsuri-komi-ashi for a second waza-ari. Never in danger, KRASNIQI controlled until the end of the match to secure the gold medal.

Turkey had a chance of medal with Merve TAS who was opposed to Nazakat AZIZOVA (AZE) in the first bronze medal contest. But AZIZOVA did not give a single chance to TAS, who despite the support of her public was immobilized by the Azeri for ippon and a first medal on a Grand Prix.

The second Israeli athlete of the cathegory was also present in the final block as Ariel BEZALEL faced Diyora KELDIYOROVA (UZB) for a spot on the podium. As nothing was scored, both athletes entered the golden score. Ariel BEZALEL finally won after KELDIYOROVA was penalised a with a second shido.

**Final**

COHEN, Gili (ISR) vs. KRASNIQI, Distria (KOS)

**Bronze medal contests**

AZIZOVA, Nazakat (AZE) vs. TAS, Merve (TUR)

BEZALEL, Ariel (ISR) vs. KELDIYOROVA, Diyora (UZB)

**Final Results**

1. KRASNIQI, Distria (KOS)

2. COHEN, Gili (ISR)

3. AZIZOVA, Nazakat (AZE)

3. BEZALEL, Ariel (ISR)

5. KELDIYOROVA, Diyora (UZB)

5. TAS, Merve (TUR)

7. CALISKAN, Damla (TUR)

7. SIKIC, Tena (CRO)

**-57kg: GJAKOVA TOPS THE PODIUM AGAIN FOR KOSOVO**

Undoubtedly, it was a sumptuous day for Kosovo, as for the second time of the day, the small country of the Balkans, opened the doors of the final thanks to Nora GJAKOVA this time. Although she was a bit more laborious than KRASNIQI in -52kg, she still secured her place on the podium by solidly defeating Kseniia BELDIAGINA (KGZ) in the first round before winning against Khulan TSEREGBAATAR (MGL) with a small penalty difference during the golden score.

In the final GJAKOVA found on her way to the top of the podium Timna NELSON LEVY, Israel definitely being part of the celebration among women’s athletes today in Antalya. Sanobar SULTONOVA (UZB) and Bekky LIVESEY (GBR) were the ‘victims’ of NELSON LEVY in the preliminary rounds.

GJAKOVA and NELSON LEVY entered the second half of the final with only one shido to NELSON LEVY. One minute later it was GJAKOVA’s turn to be penalised but then the Kosovan scored a waza-ari with a hip technique that she could keep as the main score until the last seconds to win a second gold medal for Kosovo here in Antalya.

The first bronze medal contest opposed Kseniia BELDIAGINA (KGZ) and Bekky LIVESEY (GBR). With a single waza-ari, scored with a beautiful hip technique, Bekky LIVESEY (GBR) secured a second medal on a Grand Prix.

In the second bronze medal bout Sevara NISHANBAYEVA (KAZ) faced Khulan TSEREGBAATAR (MGL). NISHANBAYEVA scored a first waza-ari with a o-soto-otoshi technique, the first waza-ari of a long list as when the athletes entered into the last minute of the bout, they both had two waza-ari. But despite all the attacks, it is a shido that designated the winner. When NISHANBAYEVA dropped on her knees without putting her opponent out of balance, she knew that is was a mistake and when she received the shido, she respectfully bowed to the referee and to TSEREGBAATAR Khulan to acknowledge her bronze medal.

**Final**

GJAKOVA, Nora (KOS) vs. NELSON LEVY, Timna (ISR)

**Bronze medal contests**

BELDIAGINA, Kseniia (KGZ) vs. LIVESEY, Bekky (GBR)

NISHANBAYEVA, Sevara (KAZ) vs. TSEREGBAATAR, Khulan (MGL)

**Final Results**

1. GJAKOVA, Nora (KOS)

2. NELSON LEVY, Timna (ISR)

3. LIVESEY, Bekky (GBR)

3. TSEREGBAATAR, Khulan (MGL)

5. BELDIAGINA, Kseniia (KGZ)

5. NISHANBAYEVA, Sevara (KAZ)

7. KUTSENKO, Aigul (RUS)

7. SULTONOVA, Sanobar (UZB)

**-60kg: KYRGYZBAYEV IN GOLD, TURKEY SILVER AT HOME**

There is nothing better for an organiser than starting a tournament with one of your national athletes guaranteeing a medal. For the second consecutive year, this mission was devolved to Bekir OZLU (TUR), who obviously is very strong in his country. Already victorious last year in Samsun, after epic matches, OZLU, reiterated his feat by reaching the final after three first victorious bouts. A real achievement in a very competitive category.

In the final he was opposed to Gusman KYRGYZBAYEV (KAZ) whose way to the final was also exemplary. After a first waza-ari victory against Batyr GURBANYAZOV (TKM), KYRGYZBAYEV eliminated his next two opponents on the score of ippon, but each time he was pushed to the golden score, giving the impression that the pressure of the necessary result had a positive influence on the Kazakh.

In the sound level was already high for the second bronze medal contest of the category (read below), the public went a step higher as Bekir OZLU (TUR) entered the stadium followed by Gusman KYRGYZBAYEV. The first really strong uchi-mata from OZLU generated a wave of ‘TURKIYE, TURKIYE’ chanted by the whole arena. At any moment, it seemed that any of the two competitors could make the decisive action, OZLU with his uchi-mata, KYRGYZBAYEV with his little leg techniques that were putting the Turkish out of balance. But the final gong echoed, the scoreboard was still neutral. Totally exhausted, Ozlu seemed to have hard time to follow KYRGYZBAYEV’s rhythm and that was confirmed a few seconds later when with an opportunist action-reaction movement, scored a delivering waza-ari to win the bout.

The first bronze medal of the category was disputed between the two Mongol athletes as Amartuvshin BAYARAA (MGL) and Amarbold JAGVARALDORJ (MGL) stepped on the mat for only one place on the podium. After a bit more than a minute, BAYARAA had already two shidos for passivity, as JAGVARALDORJ was the most active by far and at the end of the four minute, Amartuvshin BAYARAA could enjoy a first Grand Prix medal, after having scored two waza-ari, one with a counterattack and one with a drop-seoi-nage.

In the second bronze medal contest the host country had a second chance for a medal as Ahmet Sahin KABA (TUR) was opposed to YANG Yung Wei (TPE). Suddenly the sound level increased in the stadium when KABA entered the competition area. Supported by thousands of young judoka from the seven clubs of the city, the Turkish athlete could count on a supplement of power. Halfway to the end, nothing was scored yet, but YANG had a penalty for passivity, which became a second penalty for him and a first for KABA a few seconds later as both athletes were avoiding gripping. On the edge of the tatami, KABA could score a first waza-ari after he counterattacked YANG’s uchi-mata. The last seconds were one by one announced by the crowd, which could enjoy the first medal for the host country on the occasion of this 2017 edition of the Grand Prix in Turkey.

**Final**

KYRGYZBAYEV, Gusman (KAZ) vs. OZLU, Bekir (TUR)

**Bronze medal contests**

BAYARAA, Amartuvshin (MGL) vs. JAGVARALDORJ, Amarbold (MGL)

KABA, Ahmet Sahin (TUR) vs. YANG, Yung Wei (TPE)

**Final Results**

1. KYRGYZBAYEV, Gusman (KAZ)

2. OZLU, Bekir (TUR)

3. BAYARAA, Amartuvshin (MGL)

3. KABA, Ahmet Sahin (TUR)

5. JAGVARALDORJ, Amarbold (MGL)

5. YANG, Yung Wei (TPE)

7. RAHIMA, Alon (ISR)

7. SAGYNBAI UULU, Baiaman (KGZ)

**-66kg: GOLD FOR ABDULZHALILOV**

After the elimination of the top seeded athlete, DAVAADORJ Tumurkhuleg (MGL), finalist of the last Grand Prix of Tbilisi, the second men's final of this first day of competition in Antalya saw Bektur RYSMAMBETOV (KGZ) opposed to Abdula ABDULZHALILOV (RUS), who was not among the top four athletes of the day before the start of the competition. Thus the Russian surprisingly eliminated Baruch SHMAILOV (ISR), seeded number three, on a superb combination seoi-seoi-otoshi for a waza-ari in the semi-finals.

After one minute in the final, RYSMAMBETOV was awarded with a first shido for passivity. Twenty seconds later, ABDULZHALILOV scored a waza-ari with a sode-tsuri-komi-goshi technique with a change in direction. Securing that score until the end of the final, ABDULZHALILOV won the gold medal.

The first bronze medal contest of the category opposed the two Mongol competitors, DAVAADORJ Tumurkhuleg (MGL) and DOVDON Altansukh (MGL) and it is DAVAADORJ Tumurkhuleg, who won the bronze after he defeated his teammate with a waza-ari.

The second bronze medal bout saw Baruch SHMAILOV (ISR) and Azamat MUKANOV (KAZ) facing for the last spot on the podium. Halfway to the end, only one shido was awarded to MUKANOV but then SHMAILOV took the lead with an action-reaction movement for waza-ari. Controlling until the final gong, SHMAILOV could enjoy this third medal on the occasion of a Grand Prix.

**Final**

RYSMAMBETOV, Bektur (KGZ) vs. ABDULZHALILOV, Abdula (RUS)

**Bronze medal contests**

DAVAADORJ, Tumurkhuleg (MGL) vs. DOVDON, Altansukh (MGL)

SHMAILOV, Baruch (ISR) vs. MUKANOV, Azamat (KAZ)

**Final Results**

1. ABDULZHALILOV, Abdula (RUS)

2. RYSMAMBETOV, Bektur (KGZ)

3. DAVAADORJ, Tumurkhuleg (MGL)

3. SHMAILOV, Baruch (ISR)

5. DOVDON, Altansukh (MGL)

5. MUKANOV, Azamat (KAZ)

7. SANDAL, Sinan (TUR)

7. VIERU, Denis (MDA)