21 May 2017

Ekaterinburg Grand Slam 2017, Russia - DAY TWO

Japan finish out of sight while Olympic champion doubles Russia’s golden tally

The Ekaterinburg Grand Slam 2017 cast forward leading candidates for the World Championships as the heavyweights contested the seven remaining categories on the final day of competition in Russia.

Russia’s leg of the IJF World Judo Tour was staged in Ekaterinburg for the first time and the world-class roster of nations and judoka illustrated that regardless of the city the competition has the respect of judo’s premier athletes and is a key stop on the road to the Worlds.

Day two featured the women’s -70kg, -78kg and +78g categories and men’s -81kg, -90kg, -100kg and +100kg categories at the Palace of Sports.

**Hashimoto Soichi (JPN) – The Ippon Hunter**

HASHIMOTO Soichi (JPN) is nobody’s understudy. The -73kg judoka now leads the world in the rankings having won gold on Saturday in Ekaterinburg.

However, HASHIMOTO, 25, who is undefeated on the IJF circuit since 2015, is the number two domestically with Olympic champion and double world champion ONO Shohei (JPN) for company at this weight.

The World Judo Masters winner has more than filled the void left by ONO who is taking some time out from international competition and will miss the World Championships to focus on completing his studies at Tenri University.

The charismatic star has excelled over the last 12 months as he has earned comparisons to Japan’s all-time great and 1992 Olympic champion KOGA Toshihiko (JPN) and this year the responsibility lies with the Worlds debutant to keep the -73kg title in Japan.

Judo’s founding nation has proved to be unbeatable at this weight with AKIMOTO Hiroyuki winning in 2010, NAKAYA Riki triumphing in 2011 and 2014 and ONO Shohei capturing the World crown in 2013 and 2015.

“I am very happy with this gold medal,” said HASHIMOTO who pushed for ippon in the final (against Marcelo CONTINI) despite being in control with an advantage of two waza-ari scores without reply.

Relentless in his pursuit of the maximum score and his favoured sode-tsurikomi-goshi, which he calls the HASHIMOTO special, the Japanese explained his philosophy.

“The reason is very simple, I always want to get ippon, when I had first waza-ari, I thought about defensive judo, but I really wanted ippon.

“Sode-tsurikomi-goshi is one of my main techniques, it is my favourite, but I can achieve this in many different ways and until the World Championships I will work on this even more.”

When asked about being his country’s only judoka at -73kg at the Worlds – and the absence of ONO Shohei – HASHIMOTO was positive and is relishing the opportunity to take his majestic talent to the World Championships stage.

“ONO is a very good rival for me, but he is nothing to do with me this year, as my main target is to become world champion.

 “My target is Worlds gold and I want to win every contest by ippon in Budapest.”

As the IJF wraps up the elite side of proceedings in Ekaterinburg, a separate IJF delegation has arrived in Dagestan to film the latest #JudoForTheWorld video.

**Click here to watch the #JudoForTheWorld series - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcThtoN6E0szWYgOBIAsz2WFB4JQFP4CD**

London 2012 Olympic champions Arsen GALSTYAN, Mansur ISAEV and Tagir KHAIBULAEV will lead training sessions with budding judoka and explain the role judo has played in their lives and making them the champions that they are today.

Stay tuned to the IJF’s social media channels for updates from the Dagestan filming.

The IJF World Judo Tour now heads for Mexico for the first Cancun Grand Prix from 16 – 18 June. The IJF visited Mexico for the first time last year to stage the World Judo Masters in Guadalajara and the best judoka in the world are set for the penultimate Grand Prix ahead of August’s World Championships.

**Click here to watch the #JudoCancun2017 trailer - https://www.facebook.com/ijudo/videos/10155157223603536/**

Entries are flying in for the IJF’s trip to Pan America which will also see three-time Olympian and double continental champion Vanessa ZAMBOTTI (MEX) officially retire in her homeland.

**Watch #JudoCancun2017 live and free at** [**www.ippon.tv**](http://www.ippon.tv)

Full results: http://www.ippon.org/gs\_rus2017.php

**Women
-70kg: Valiant VAN DIJKE fights back to triumph on the road to Budapest**European champion Sanne VAN DIJKE (NED) won Grand Slam gold with a come-from-behind win in the final over former Casablanca African Open bronze medallist Alena PROKOPENKO (RUS). The Russian took an unexpected lead with a waza-ari from a sumi-gaeshi as the vastly-improved Russian tested the mettle of her Dutch opponent. Tokyo 2020 prospect VAN DIJKE is currently concentrating on Budapest 2017 and fought back from a waza-ari deficit to tie the contest with nine seconds remaining and moved into osaekomi for the win as the lack of contest management of the home judoka was exposed in the closing seconds.

In the first semi-final PROKOPENKO beat Tokyo Grand Slam winner NIIZOE Saki (JPN) by ippon with nine seconds left on the clock while in the second semi-final VAN DIJKE beat two-time Grand Slam bronze medallist Aleksandra SAMARDZIC (BIH) by ippon.

The first bronze medal was won by former Budapest Grand Prix bronze medallist Anna BERNHOLM (SWE) who submitted beaten semi-finalist SAMARDZIC with a juji-gatame. The Swede had lost at this stage at a Grand Slam on five occasions but looks stronger at -70kg and will be a judoka to watch in this category on the road to Tokyo 2020.

The second bronze medal contest was won by NIIZOE who had the beating of world silver medallist Maria BERNABEU (ESP). Former Baku Grand Slam winner BERNABEU lost by the smallest of margins as NIIZOE prevailed by a waza-ari to win her first Grand Slam medal outside of Japan.

**Final**PROKOPENKO, Alena (RUS) vs VAN DIJKE, Sanne (NED)

**Bronze Medal Fights**SAMARDZIC, Aleksandra (BIH) vs BERNHOLM, Anna (SWE)
NIIZOE, Saki (JPN) vs BERNABEU, Maria (ESP)

**Final Results**

1. VAN DIJKE, Sanne (NED)
2. PROKOPENKO, Alena (RUS)
3. BERNHOLM, Anna (SWE)
3. NIIZOE, Saki (JPN)
5. SAMARDZIC, Aleksandra (BIH)
5. BERNABEU, Maria (ESP)
7. PEREZ, Maria (PUR)
7. PORTELA, Maria (BRA)

**-78kg: World champ UMEKI earns first Grand Slam crown as title defence looms**

World champion UMEKI Mami (JPN) won her first Grand Slam title and in process recorded back-to-back wins on the IJF World Judo Tour. UMEKI, 22, who was worn her red backpatch since 2015 – as there are no World Championships in an Olympic year – won the Dusseldorf Grand Prix last time out and won all four of her contests in Ekaterinburg by ippon including the final against double European bronze medallist Natalie POWELL (GBR). World number five, POWELL, fighting in her first Grand Slam final, matched her Japanese opponent for much of the contest but when the action moved to the ground it was UMEKI who was sharper and applied a ude-garami and the Welsh judoka was forced to submit.

In the first semi-final European Championships bronze medallist JOO Abigel (HUN) lost out to UMEKI who forced the Hungarian to submit while also holding her down.

In the second semi-final POWELL left her leg in just long enough to turn Abu Dhabi Grand Slam silver medallist Anna Maria WAGNER (GER) on the edge of the mat and drive over the youngster for ippon.

The first bronze medal was spectacularly claimed by WAGNER who launched Sofia European Open bronze medallist Antonina SHMELEVA (RUS) with a sumptuous hane-goshi for ippon with a minute remaining.

The second bronze medal contest saw JOO continue to build momentum towards Budapest 2017 as she defeated Budapest Grand Prix bronze medallist Karen STEVENSON (NED) by the maximum score after 90 seconds.

**Final**POWELL, Natalie (GBR) vs UMEKI, Mami (JPN)

**Bronze Medal Fights**WAGNER, Anna Maria (GER) vs SHMELEVA, Antonina (RUS)
JOO, Abigel (HUN) vs STEVENSON, Karen (NED)

**Final Results**

1. UMEKI, Mami (JPN)
2. POWELL, Natalie (GBR)
3. WAGNER, Anna Maria (GER)
3. JOO, Abigel (HUN)
5. SHMELEVA, Antonina (RUS)
5. STEVENSON, Karen (NED)
7. MALONGA, Madeleine (FRA)
7. DMITRIEVA, Anastasiya (RUS)

**+78kg: ASAHINA earns second Grand Slam win on the road in 2017**

Paris Grand Slam winner ASAHINA Sarah (JPN) continued her undefeated streak with a comfortable win in Russia. Tokai University member ASAHINA, 20, has now won Grand Slams in Tokyo, Paris and Ekaterinburg in succession and won the All Japan Openweight Championships in April. The Japanese starlet defeated European Games silver medallist Jasmin KUELBS (GER) for her latest success with a waza-ari from an uchi-mata proving the difference after four minutes.

In the first semi-final European Championships bronze medallist Larisa CERIC (BIH) was thwarted by ASAHINA who threw with a harai-goshi for ippon.

In the second semi-final KUELBS showed off her ashi-waza to throw European Championships bronze medallist Carolin WEISS (GER) for the maximum score.

The first bronze medal was claimed by WEISS who bested double world silver medallist Maria Suelen ALTHEMAN (BRA) by a waza-ari score which from a ura-nage after 20 seconds of golden score.

The second bronze medal contest was won by European Championships winner Maryna SLUTSKAYA (BLR) as CERIC accumulated three shido penalties to receive hansoku-make.

**Final**KUELBS, Jasmin (GER) vs ASAHINA, Sarah (JPN)

**Bronze Medal Fights**WEISS, Carolin (GER) vs ALTHEMAN, Maria Suelen (BRA)
CERIC, Larisa (BIH) vs SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR)

**Final Results**

1. ASAHINA, Sarah (JPN)
2. KUELBS, Jasmin (GER)
3. WEISS, Carolin (GER)
3. SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR)
5. ALTHEMAN, Maria Suelen (BRA)
5. CERIC, Larisa (BIH)
7. CHIBISOVA, Ksenia (RUS)
7. SAVELKOULS, Tessie (NED)

**MEN**

**-81kg: The gold backpatch fits as KHALMURZAEV wins at home**Rio 2016 Olympic champion Khasan KHALMURZAEV (RUS) thrilled the partisan crowd as he beat two-time Grand Slam runner-up UNGVARI Attila (HUN) in the -81kg final. The 23-year-old crowd pleaser punched the air after throwing UNGVARI with a uchi-mata for ippon after just 58 seconds. KHALMURZAEV celebrated his second Grand Slam gold after a win in Baku in 2015 but this victory was extra sweet as it was his first IJF competition since he won the Olympics and it came in front of his family, friends and fans. KHALMURZAEV is now the front-runner to top the -81kg podium at the World Championships and the gold backpatch will be a target on his back for all entrants in Budapest.

In the first semi-final Paris Grand Slam winner Frank DE WIT (NED) was outlasted by KHALMURZAEV who threw the young Dutchman with an uchi-mata for a waza-ari score after 12 seconds of golden score.

In the second semi-final UNGVARI defeated Antalya Grand Prix bronze medallist Murat KHABACHIROV (RUS) as the latter ran out of steam in golden score. UNGVARI, the younger brother of Hungarian legend UNGVARI Miklos, rolled over the Russian after 68 seconds of golden score for a match-winning waza-ari.

The first bronze medal was clinched Pan American Championships bronze medallist Etienne BRIAND (CAN) who narrowly defeated KHABACHIROV with a waza-ari score after four minutes from a morote-seoi-nage to open his Grand Slam medal account.

Paris Grand Slam silver medallist Zebeda REKHVIASHVILI (GEO) won the second bronze medal after a surprisingly one-sided clash against top seed DE WIT. REKHVIASHVILI has the tall order of filling the gap left by former world champion Avtandili TCHRIKISHVILI (GEO) who has moved up to -90kg but is making great strides as he showed here with three waza-ari scores giving him the platform to go on and win by ippon.

**Final**UNGVARI, Attila (HUN) vs KHALMURZAEV, Khasan (RUS)

**Bronze Medal Fights**KHABACHIROV, Murat (RUS) vs BRIAND, Etienne (CAN)
DE WIT, Frank (NED) vs REKHVIASHVILI, Zebeda (GEO)

**Final Results**

1. KHALMURZAEV, Khasan (RUS)
2. UNGVARI, Attila (HUN)
3. BRIAND, Etienne (CAN)
3. REKHVIASHVILI, Zebeda (GEO)
5. KHABACHIROV, Murat (RUS)
5. DE WIT, Frank (NED)
7. CHAPARYAN, Andranik (ARM)
7. PENALBER, Victor (BRA)

**-90kg: NAGASAWA goes unbeaten for Japan as TOTH takes silver on return**

Tokyo Grand Slam bronze medallist NAGASAWA Kenta (JPN) stepped up to the Grand Slam level with the best performance of his young career as he beat the returning former world silver medallist TOTH Krisztian (HUN) in golden score. TOTH, who was making his comeback having undergone shoulder surgery and recently returned to full health, is never involved in flat contests. The Hungarian has a tendency to be locked in the most engaging and dramatic of battles but could not generate his usual power and the contest was scoreless after four minutes. NAGASAWA found an extra gear in added time and, as Japan team manager INOUE Kosei looked on matside, was able to trap TOTH on the ground and the latter decided to tap out to save himself for another day as he aims for World Championships at home in August.

In the first semi-final Casablanca African Open winner Nikoloz SHERAZADISHVILI (ESP) lost out to the returning TOTH by a waza-ari score. In the second semi-final four-time Grand Slam runner-up Noel VAN T END (NED) suffered defeat at the hands of NAGASAWA via a harai-goshi at the halfway mark.

The first bronze medal was won by VAN T END who made a strong finish as he beat double Grand Slam silver medallist Ushangi MARGIANI (GEO) in golden score by a waza-ari score for his fifth medal at this level.

**The second bronze medal went to** Magomed MAGOMEDOV (RUS) who held down SHERAZADISHVILI for 20 seconds for ippon having sent the Spaniard to the ground with a thunderous osoto-gari which warranted a waza-ari score.

**Final**NAGASAWA, Kenta (JPN) vs TOTH, Krisztian (HUN)

**Bronze Medal Fights**VAN T END, Noel (NED) vs MARGIANI, Ushangi (GEO)
SHERAZADISHVILI, Nikoloz (ESP) vs MAGOMEDOV, Magomed (RUS)

**Final Results**

1. NAGASAWA, Kenta (JPN)
2. TOTH, Krisztian (HUN)
3. VAN T END, Noel (NED)
3. MAGOMEDOV, Magomed (RUS)
5. MARGIANI, Ushangi (GEO)
5. SHERAZADISHVILI, Nikoloz (ESP)
7. BETTONI, Eduardo (BRA)
7. BENAMADI, Abderrahmane (ALG)

**-100kg: Outsider CIRJENICS surges up the rankings after Grand Slam glory**

Baku Grand Slam bronze medallist CIRJENICS Miklos (HUN) won -100kg gold as Hungary’s top performer in the final Grand Slam before his country hosts the World Championships in August. World number 22 CIRJENICS won all four of his contests by ippon with the finest display of his career. Antalya Grand Prix bronze medallist Niyaz ILYASOV (RUS) was countered for a waza-ari score before the flowing Hungarian added two further waza-ari scores. CIRJENICS had the Russian locked in a tate-shiho-gatame hold and then adjusted to a juji-gatame to win by submission.

In the first semi-final two-time Grand Slam bronze medallist Jevgenijs BORODAVKO (LAT) tapped out to CIRJENICS in the last 30 seconds.

In the second semi-final ILYASOV caught Olympic silver medallist Varlam LIPARTELIANI (GEO) with an ouchi-gari after an initial uchi-mata attempt and the Georgian failed to counter as he fell down into the bronze medal contest.

The first bronze medal was indeed won by LIPARTELIANI against -100kg newcomer Alexandre IDDIR (FRA). The Frenchman moved up in February and came up against one of his old -90kg rivals and the pair could not be separated in four minutes of regulation time. An additional 20 seconds provided a winner as IDDIR was penalised with a shido for a false attack.

The second bronze medal went to Zagreb Grand Prix bronze medallist Laurin BOEHLER (AUT) who secured his first Grand Slam medal in explosive fashion. The Austrian lifted up BORODAVKO with a gigantic ura-nage for ippon as the crowd roared with approval.

**Final**ILYASOV, Niyaz (RUS) vs CIRJENICS, Miklos (HUN)

**Bronze Medal Fights**LIPARTELIANI, Varlam (GEO) vs IDDIR, Alexandre (FRA)
BORODAVKO, Jevgenijs (LAT) vs BOEHLER, Laurin (AUT)

**Final Results**

1. CIRJENICS, Miklos (HUN)
2. ILYASOV, Niyaz (RUS)
3. LIPARTELIANI, Varlam (GEO)
3. BOEHLER, Laurin (AUT)
5. IDDIR, Alexandre (FRA)
5. BORODAVKO, Jevgenijs (LAT)
7. FARA, Aaron (AUT)
7. CORREA, Luciano (BRA)

**+100kg: Mobile MOURA eyes Worlds challenge after maiden Grand Slam success**

The eighth Grand Slam medal for Tbilisi Grand Prix bronze medallist David MOURA (BRA) was finally of the golden variety as he conquered former Tokyo Grand Slam silver medallist Levani MATIASHVILI (GEO) in an entertaining men’s heavyweight final. MOURA and MATIASHVILI were fighting to break into the elite ranks alongside Olympic and world medallists but both have their hands full on to earn international selections with depth at the domestic heavyweight levels in Brazil and Georgia. The heavyweights shook each other with osoto-gari attacks but for no score and were eventually separated in golden score when the Georgian received a second shido to finish second and put MOURA onto the top of the podium.

In the first semi-final MOURA defeated Mongolia’s Rio 2016 Olympic flagbearer BATTULGA Temuulen (MGL) by ippon with a left-sided uchi-mata. In the second semi-final European u23 Championships bronze medallist Uladzislau TSIARPITSKI (BLR) lost out to MATIASHVILI by a waza-ari.

The first bronze medal was won by 2016 Tyumen Grand Slam winner Andrey VOLKOV (RUS) who delivered a buzzer-beating waza-ari which was awarded in time and spared both men from golden score.

The second and last bronze medal contest saw BATTULGA work his way past Baku Grand Slam silver medallist BOR Barna (HUN) by a waza-ari score to delight the huge group of travelling Mongolian fans in the upper tier at the Palace of Sports.

**Final**MATIASHVILI, Levani (GEO) vs MOURA, David (BRA)

**Bronze Medal Fights**TSIARPITSKI, Uladzislau (BLR) vs VOLKOV, Andrey (RUS)
BATTULGA, Temuulen (MGL) vs BOR, Barna (HUN)

**Final Results**

1. MOURA, David (BRA)
2. MATIASHVILI, Levani (GEO)
3. VOLKOV, Andrey (RUS)
3. BATTULGA, Temuulen (MGL)
5. TSIARPITSKI, Uladzislau (BLR)
5. BOR, Barna (HUN)
7. NATEA, Daniel (ROU)
7. SILVA, Rafael (BRA)

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