29 July 2018

Zagreb Grand Prix 2018, Croatia – DAY THREE

**Women
-78kg: French flyer MALONGA wins third Grand Prix gold medal**

European champion Madeleine MALONGA (FRA) ruled in Zagreb as she beat Düsseldorf Grand Slam bronze medallist Klara APOTEKAR (SLO) for the third time in as many meetings for -78kg gold. MALONGA rushed out and launched attacks from the outset which put APOTEKAR on the back foot. MALONGA, who will make her senior World Championships debut in September, utilised her ippon seoi-nage to defeat her Slovenian adversary by the maximum score. World number six MALONGA will jump up the rankings and could be among the top seeds in Baku where she will be one of the favourites for gold.

In the first semi-final European bronze medallist Anna Maria WAGNER (GER) lost out to MALONGA by ippon in golden score after regulation time ended with a waza-ari score apiece.

In the second semi-final APOTEKAR shocked seven-time Grand Prix winner Audrey TCHEUMEO (FRA) in golden sore when the Frenchwoman picked up her third shido in an insipid display.

The first bronze medal contest was won by TCHEUMEO who floored defending champion Zagreb Grand Prix champion HAMADA Shori (JPN) with a ko-uchi-gari for ippon.

The second bronze medal was an all-Germany affair and it was WAGNER who represented her country on the podium after beating Ekaterinburg Grand Slam silver medallist Luise MALZAHN (GER). WAGNER caught her teammate and 18-time Grand Prix medallist MALZAHN with an ouchi-gari for ippon as the latter failed to set a new record of 19 Grand Prix medals and remains tied with Otgontsetseg GALBADRAKH (KAZ).

**Final**APOTEKAR, Klara (SLO) vs MALONGA, Madeleine (FRA)

**Bronze Medal Fights**TCHEUMEO, Audrey (FRA) vs HAMADA, Shori (JPN)
MALZAHN, Luise (GER) vs WAGNER, Anna Maria (GER)

**Final Results**

1. MALONGA, Madeleine (FRA)
2. APOTEKAR, Klara (SLO)
3. TCHEUMEO, Audrey (FRA)
3. WAGNER, Anna Maria (GER)
5. HAMADA, Shori (JPN)
5. MALZAHN, Luise (GER)
7. AGUIAR, Mayra (BRA)
7. PRODAN, Karla (CRO)

**+78kg: Slovenia’s** VELENSEK, the lightest judoka in the division, wins sixth Grand Prix title

Olympic bronze medallist Anamari VELENSEK (SLO) won the +78kg heavyweight gold medal in Zagreb as the lightest judoka in the category proved to be the best judoka on this day. Openweight World Championships bronze medallist Nihel CHEIKH ROUHOU (TUN) was drawn into unfamiliar territory on the ground by the agile Slovenian who locked on a juji-gatame for ippon. Former -78kg star VELENSEK increased her Grand Prix gold medal tally to six while also providing her country with their third medal of the weekend.

In the first semi-final VELENSEK (SLO) defeated Tbilisi Grand Prix silver medallist Maryna SLUTSKAYA (BLR) by a waza-ari score to guarantee one more medal for the Slovenian delegation in Croatia.

In the second semi-final former European champion Kayra SAYIT (TUR) was held down by ROUHOU (TUN) for ippon.

The first bronze medal was awarded to Agadir Grand Prix winner Yelyzaveta KALANINA (UKR) as beaten semi-finalist SAYIT could not compete due to a knee injury.

The second bronze medal was won by ASAHINA returned to winning ways as she defeated Tbilisi Grand Prix silver medallist Maryna SLUTSKAYA (BLR). Kodokan product ASAHINA opened the scoring with a waza-ari and added a second with a kami-shiho-gatame before being congratulated by her father in the stands.

**Final**CHEIKH ROUHOU, Nihel (TUN) vs VELENSEK, Anamari (SLO)

**Bronze Medal Fights**SAYIT, Kayra (TUR) vs KALANINA, Yelyzaveta (UKR)
ASAHINA, Sarah (JPN) vs SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR)

**Final Results**

1. VELENSEK, Anamari (SLO)
2. CHEIKH ROUHOU, Nihel (TUN)
3. KALANINA, Yelyzaveta (UKR)
3. ASAHINA, Sarah (JPN)
5. SAYIT, Kayra (TUR)
5. SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR)
7. CERIC, Larisa (BIH)
7. KINDZERSKA, Iryna (AZE)

**MEN
-90kg: Former world champion** TCHRIKISHVILI ends barren run with first -90kg medal

Former -81kg world champion Avtandili TCHRIKISHVILI (GEO) finally made his presence felt in the -90kg category as he won all six of his contests to win his first medal since 2016. TCHRIKISHVILI faced former world champion Asley GONZALEZ (CUB) in the -90kg final and the classy Cuban, who himself has been fighting within himself of late on the IJF World Judo Tour in recent years. TCHRIKISHVILI was supported by his wife, young son and brother-in-law in the crowd and seemed to raise his performance to a level which he hasn't reached in years. A waza-ari for the Georgian was enough at the end of the contest to earn his first medal at -90kg in his sixth competition at this heavier weight.

In the first semi-final World champion Nemanja MAJDOV (SRB) lost out to GONZALEZ when he was shocked to receive a shido for a gripping infringement and lost his focus as the Cuban threw his Serbian rival for a waza-ari and held on with osaekomi to guarantee at least a silver medal.

In the second semi-final Paris Grand Slam bronze medallist Axel CLERGET (FRA) narrowly lost out to TCHRIKISHVILI by a waza-ari score in a hard-fought contest.

The first bronze medal was won by Antalya Grand Prix bronze medallist Mammadali MEHDIYEV (AZE) who threw CLERGET with 70 seconds left on the clock. After being locked together it was the Azeri who overpowered his opponent to win the opening contest in the final block.

The second bronze medal went to MAJDOV who threw former Qingdao Grand Prix winner Max STEWART (GBR) for a waza-ari and held down the Brition for a second and match-winning score. Both judoka were coached by their respective fathers and exchanged sincere greetings post-contest as they showed their immense respect for each other.

**Final**TCHRIKISHVILI, Avtandili (GEO) vs GONZALEZ, Asley (CUB)

**Bronze Medal Fights**CLERGET, Axel (FRA) vs MEHDIYEV, Mammadali (AZE)
MAJDOV, Nemanja (SRB) vs STEWART, Max (GBR)

**Final Results**

1. TCHRIKISHVILI, Avtandili (GEO)
2. GONZALEZ, Asley (CUB)
3. MEHDIYEV, Mammadali (AZE)
3. MAJDOV, Nemanja (SRB)
5. CLERGET, Axel (FRA)
5. STEWART, Max (GBR)
7. RANDL, Milan (SVK)
7. EFEMGIL, Batuhan (TUR)

**-100kg: Russian youngster wins first Grand Prix title**

Ekaterinburg Grand Slam winner Niyaz ILYASOV (RUS) registered his country in the gold medal column for the only time in Zagreb as he bested three-time Grand Slam silver medallist Kyle REYES (CAN) in the -100kg final. World number 95 REYES, who has been plagued by injuries, shone in the preliminaries but met his match in the final as the Canadian gave up two scores to the world number 14 who is a talent that Russia could fast-track to the World Championships this year. Both judoka will come away from this final with a lot of positives and will be worth monitoring at Azerbaijan’s first World Judo Championships.

In the first semi-final World Judo Masters bronze medallist Elkhan MAMMADOV (AZE) was humbled by REYES who scored ippon with a ko-uchi-gari in golden score.

In the second semi-final Ekaterinburg Grand Slam winner Niyaz ILYASOV (RUS) defeated IIDA by ippon with a ko-soto-gari to book his place in the gold medal contest.

The first bronze medal was won by IIDA who drove past Belgrade European cup silver medallist Danylo HUTSOL (UKR). Japan’s -100kg hope threw with an osoto-gari for ippon with exactly 90 seconds left in the contest as HUTSOL finished a respectable fifth in his first appearance in the final block at an IJF event.

The second bronze medal went to former Tbilisi European Open bronze medallist Lasha TAVELURI (GEO) who trapped MAMMADOV in a pin for 20 seconds and ippon.

**Final**ILYASOV, Niyaz (RUS) vs REYES, Kyle (CAN)

**Bronze Medal Fights**IIDA, Kentaro (JPN) vs HUTSOL, Danylo (UKR)
MAMMADOV, Elkhan (AZE) vs TAVELURI, Lasha (GEO)

**Final Results**

1. ILYASOV, Niyaz (RUS)
2. REYES, Kyle (CAN)
3. IIDA, Kentaro (JPN)
3. TAVELURI, Lasha (GEO)
5. HUTSOL, Danylo (UKR)
5. MAMMADOV, Elkhan (AZE)
7. DENISOV, Kirill (RUS)
7. MUKETE, Daniel (BLR)

**+100kg: TUSHISHVILI topples the heavyweight field to win in style**

Tbilisi Grand Prix winner Guram TUSHISHVILI (GEO) won his second Grand Prix gold medal this year with a mesmerising display as he won four of his five contests by ippon to add to his growing reputation and hopes fo capturing his first world title in September. The Tower of Tbilisi opposed Rio 2016 Olympic bronze medallist Or SASSON (ISR) in the final and raced pas the Israeli powerhouse bv ippon with an opportunistic tani-otoshi after 91 seconds. TUSHISHVILI, 23, finished fifth on his senior Worlds debut last year, but is a year wiser and stronger now and based on this showing his judo is maturing. SASSON, 27, also has world ambitions and will be a contender to step onto a podium at the crown jewel of the IJF World Judo Tour for the first time at the end of September.

In the first semi-final former world bronze medallist Iakiv KHAMMO (UKR) slipped to defeat against TUSHISHVILI (GEO) by a waza-ari which was the only score in an entertaining contest.

In the second semi-final SASSON benefited from an error-strewn showing by Pan American Championships bronze medallist Ruan ISQUIERDO (BRA) who was penalised three times to receive hansoku-make.

The first bronze medal was won by Antalya Grand Prix winner Inal TASOEV (RUS) in just seven seconds as the highly-rated Russian launched ISQUIERDO with a gigantic sode for ippon

The second bronze medal went to KHAMMO who beat European Championships bronze medallist HEGYI Stephan (AUT). Ukraine’s KHAMMO broke the deadlock with an osoto-makikomi for a waza-ari score and held down the young Austrian to seal his place on the podium.

**Final**SASSON, Or (ISR) vs TUSHISHVILI, Guram (GEO)

**Bronze Medal Fights**ISQUIERDO, Ruan (BRA) vs TASOEV, Inal (RUS)
KHAMMO, Yakiv (UKR) vs HEGYI, Stephan (AUT)

**Final Results**

1. TUSHISHVILI, Guram (GEO)
2. SASSON, Or (ISR)
3. TASOEV, Inal (RUS)
3. KHAMMO, Yakiv (UKR)
5. ISQUIERDO, Ruan (BRA)
5. HEGYI, Stephan (AUT)
7. KOKAURI, Ushangi (AZE)
7. SPIJKERS, Jur (NED)