

Tomoya Tsuboi and Sewon Okazawa achieved historical gold medals for Japan

The first part of the finals was held at the AIBA World Boxing Championships in Belgrade, Serbia today. The finals of the flyweight (51kg), featherweight (57kg), light welterweight (63.5kg), light middleweight (71kg), light heavyweight (80kg) and heavyweight (92kg) all took place in the Stark Arena on Day11. Japan never claimed any gold medal in the history of the AIBA World Boxing Championships but on this Friday their Tomoya Tsuboi and Sewon Okazawa both claimed the titles.

Kazakhstan's Temirtas Zhussupov is the first winner in Belgrade

An Asian final was held in the minimumweight (48kg) at the AIBA World Boxing Championships which opened the day of the finals. The Asians have got strong traditions in the smallest weight category, this time a boxer from Kazakhstan and a representative from the Thailand Boxing Federation advanced to the final. Generally, this is a weight class from the next generation, many of the previous champions won medals as a young talent but in Belgrade two veterans competed for the gold medal.

Kazakhstan's 33-year-old Temirtas Zhussupov joined to the international events still in 2009 and claimed gold at the Amman 2013 ASBC Asian Elite Boxing Championships. The Kazakh boxer met with Thailand Boxing Federation's Wuttichai Yurachai who is 29-year-old and won the Cologne Boxing World Cup two and half years ago. Both boxers tried to land quick punches in the first round and began the final in the same rhythm. Following the equal first round, Zhussupov opened the second with quicker shots and he found the right distance against the experienced Thai. Zhussupov had massive advantage after six minutes therefore Yurachai gave up all tactical positions and tried to land decisive and stronger punches. Zhussupov's footwork was uncomfortable for Yurachai and the Kazakh controlled the third round well enough to win the first title of the AIBA World Boxing Championships.

"My opponent was so quick and strong but I could do my actions faster. My best round was the second when I felt the distance," said Kazakhstan's Temirtas Zhussupov who won his first AIBA title at the age of 33.

Tomoya Tsuboi claimed a historical gold medal for Japan

The second final of the AIBA World Boxing Championships was also held between two Asian boxers, Kazakhstan's super talented Makhmud Sabyrkhan and Japan's Tomoya Tsuboi marched to the title contest at the bantamweight (54kg). Sabyrkhan won the Puerto Princesa 2017 ASBC Asian Junior Boxing Championships, the Bangkok 2018 ASBC Asian Youth Boxing Championships and the Ulaanbaatar 2019 ASBC Asian Youth Boxing Championships. His Japanese opponent, Tomoya Tsuboi has got six years of international experiences and eliminated France's taller Billal Bennama in the semi-finals.

The five-years younger Sabyrkhan used his tricky movements before the attacks and he started the final with amazing motivations. Tsuboi was patient and waited for the best attacking moments but received punches from Sabyrkhan when he opened his defence. Both boxers increased their tempo in the second round and their contest became more spectacular in Belgrade. Tsuboi's double shots from longer range was impressive in the second round therefore Sabyrkhan had to move ahead in the third round of their final. Despite of Sabyrkhan's amazing technical skills, Tsuboi was more punctual in the second part of the final to take the gold medal for Japan. Tsuboi's success means Japan earned its first ever gold medal in the history of the AIBA Men's Elite World Boxing Championships.

"I trained so hard after my losses in the previous years to be a champion. I am the first from Japan, fantastic feeling. Thanks for my coaches to Yuji and Hirokuni to work for me a successful tactic," added Japan's historical winner Tomoya Tsuboi who progressed amazingly in the recent three years.

Sofiane Oumiha won his second world title after 2017

Two of the world's most technician lightweight (60kg) boxers advanced to the finals in Belgrade where Uzbekistan's Abdumalik Khalakov and France's Sofiane Oumiha met each other at the very first time. Both boxers had the same style of boxing which is based on patience, footwork and amazing counter-punches therefore their bout was one of the most awaited in the eleventh competition day.

Khalakov is a counter-puncher but this time he moved forward and tried to keep the control from the first seconds. The Uzbek boxer was enough fast to reach the French boxer who played his own game in their amazing technical final. Khalakov switched his stance several times in the first round but Oumiha's counter-punches guaranteed his advantage after three minutes. The seven-years-old French had excellent defence in the bout and his tactical weapons became smarter today. Oumiha kept his control and his best strategy until the last gong to beat one of the best hopes of the world, Abdumalik Khalakov.

“It is amazing that I could win my second title in the AIBA World Boxing Championships. It was a real final and I think I am now a former Soviet specialist, I have good record against them. Abdumalik Khalakov is an outstanding boxer, he tried to be Sofiane Oumiha today, but in my game I was more comfortable. It was a real final and I enjoyed it so much,” added France’s Sofiane Oumiha after his final in the mixed zone.

Japan’s second gold medal was achieved by Sewon Okazawa

Japan’s ASBC Asian Boxing Championships silver medallist Sewon Okazawa eliminated his main rival, Kazakhstan’s Ablaikhan Zhussupov in the semi-finals of the welterweight (67kg) and met with a fresh US boxer, Omari Jones who walked over to the finals. Okazawa looked still fresh in his sixth bouts in Belgrade and he tried to follow his teammate, Tomoya Tsuboi to make a perfect day for Japan. The US welterweight (67kg) boxer was taller than the Japanese but he moved forward more to catch the quick Okazawa.

The Japanese boxer, who has got strong roots from Ghana, had superb defensive skills but Jones also had great knowledge from boxing despite of his lack of international experiences. Okazawa was more confident from the middle of the second round but Jones finished the period with some nice shots. The final verdict was depended on their performance in the third round when Okazawa worked enough from longer distance to win Japan’s second gold medal on Friday. The country of the rising sun produced its best ever competition day.

“It was a really tough fight, my US opponent is so strong, I could not catch him easily today. I had an injury in my left shoulder, I had a pain therefore I tried to manage this bout with my right hand. I am so happy that I could win Japan’s second gold after Tomoya Tsuboi. My teammate was amazing today,” said Japan’s Sewon Okazawa after his narrow success at the welterweight (67kg).

Cuba’s Yoennis Hernandez made an impressive international debut in Belgrade

Russian Boxing Federation’s biggest talent in our sport is Dzhambulat Bizhamov who claimed gold medal at the Budapest 2018 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships and twice in the EUBC European Youth Boxing Championships. His final opponent, Cuba’s Yoennis Hernandez joined to the elite national team in the end of 2019 but he impressed in the previous stages of the event.

Bizhamov, who is two-time Russian Elite National Champion despite of his age of 20, is a powerful puncher and his jabs caught the Cuban in the first minute. Hernandez landed uppercuts in the middle of the first round and he fully adopted the high rhythm of the bout still

in the opening period. Bizhamov pushed the 24-year-old Cuban to the corner in the second round but Hernandez had good defence to handle the dangerous situation. The Cuban overcame Bizhamov in the attacks in the middle period and he had the strong advantage before the final round. The Cuban middleweight (75kg) boxer is newcomer in the international stage but his skills were enough to win the title of the AIBA World Boxing Championships.

“I worked hard in the recent years to be involved to the Cuban national team. The hard work paid off today and I tried to be patient in the final,” commented his success Cuba’s new middleweight (75kg) World Champion, Yoennis Hernandez.

Azerbaijan’s Loren Berto Alfonso won the narrowest final of the day

Brazil’s boxing life developed amazingly in the recent one decade and the South American country is one of the top nations in the world. Their Keno Machado had an impressive youth career, he won big championships in 2018 and in the recent nearly three years he competed in the elite level with great enthusiasm. The 21-year-old Brazilian had a hard work in the final of the new cruiserweight (86kg) against Azerbaijan’s Loren Berto Alfonso who is the titleholder from the European Games.

The ex-Cuban Azeri boxer was patient in the first round and their final became a great chess game in this weight class which introduced in this championship first. Machado proved better performance in the second round but it was hard to catch the quick Alfonso with powerful punches. Machado was Brazil’s first finalist since Robson Conceicao’s silver in 2013 but he reached the same result due to Alfonso’s effective counter-attacks.

“I am World Champion, I can’t believe it. I worked a lot and this new weight class is perfect for me but to accomplish my dream is fantastic. Machado was a hard rival, he has such great technical skills and hard to beat him,” commented his success Azerbaijan’s ex-Cuban Loren Berto Alfonso.

Mark Petrovskii is the new winner of the super heavyweight

Russian Boxing Federation’s Mark Petrovskii is only 22 at the super heavyweight (+92kg) but he won their National Championships in September and received the right to attend in the AIBA World Boxing Championships. The Russian eliminated one of the favourites, Germany’s Nelvie Tiafack and met in the final with Armenia’s Davit Chaloyan who returned to the national team after three years of break.

The smaller Russian started the final with aggressive attacks and he looked more active than his Armenian opponent in the opening minute. Chaloyan tried to use his longer hands more effectively in the end of the first round and the Kyrgyz referee counted Petrovskii. The 24-year-old Armenian worked hard in the second round and stopped most of the Russian attacks but Petrovskii has done an excellent finish. Both boxers were tired but gave in everything in the final round when the Armenian boxer's jabs and Petrovskii's hooks were strong. This crucial battle was won by Russian Boxing Federation's Mark Petrovskii by split decision as the last bout of the first day of the finals.