18 November 2018

The Hague Grand Prix 2018, The Netherlands – DAY THREE

The Hague’s 14 gold medals are claimed by 12 countries as 27 countries hit the medal trail in The Hague

Ukraine finished top of the medal table

Serbia, Israel and Belarus added to their names to the list of winners on the final day of competition in the Netherlands as Russia and Ukraine were the only countries to win more than one title in The Hague.

The second edition of The Hague Grand Prix saw the 14 gold medals go to 12 different countries as judo showed the world that it is without question the most competitive sport in the world.

The Rio 2016 Olympic Games saw 26 countries medal with the eyes of the world watching the pulse-pounding action unfold as judo dominated the attention of the international media.

Judo continues to thrive around the world with new member federations joining the IJF and the level of high-performance judoka in developing nations is improving as a result of projects such as the IJF Academy, Judo for Children and Judo for Peace.

After three days of world-class judo in the Netherlands, 27 countries left The Hague with a medal as countries from four different continents left with honours: Europe, Asia, Africa and Pan America.

**Cameroon enter uncharted territory with first IJF World Judo Tour medal**

Cameroon were among the medal winners as heavyweight Hortence Vanessa MBALLA ATANGANA (CMR) made history for the African nation. Rio 2016 Olympian MBALLA ATANGANA reeled off remarkable wins over Budapest Grand Prix bronze medallist JIANG Yanan (CHN), world number two Larisa CERIC (BIH), Abu Dhabi Grand Slam silver medallist Anne Fatoumata M BAIRO (FRA) before losing the final on shidos against Maryna SLUTSKAYA (BLR).

MBALLA ATANGANA did not concede a single score in her four contests and will jump up the rankings from her lowly position of 36th towards the top 18 where the impressive heavyweight needs to be to qualify for Tokyo 2020.

**Judo goes home next week for Osaka Grand Slam 2018**

The IJF World Judo Tour moves on to Japan, the sport’s homeland, for the penultimate event of the season as the Osaka Grand Slam will host the best of the best judoka from Friday 23 to Sunday 25 November.

Osaka will feature an all-star field with 454 judoka from 75 counties including Olympic and world champions from the host nation and from abroad as every participant aims to win Japan’s final major of the year.

The All Japan Judo Federation (AJJF) have picked their strongest team with two current Olympic champions and their seven world champions from Baku 2018 being called upon for the blockbuster Grand Slam.

Olympic champions ONO Shohei (-73kg) and BAKER Mashu (-90kg) and world champions TAKATO Naohisa (-60kg), ABE Hifumi (-66kg), ABE Uta (-52kg), YOSHIDA Tsukasa (-57kg), ARAI Chizuru (-70kg), HAMADA Shori (-78kg) and ASAHINA Sarah (+78kg).

**Neil Adams’ Technical Analysis**

*British legend Neil ADAMS, who was in The Hague in his commentary role for the IJF, shared his technical feedback on the final Grand Prix of the 2018 season.*

One of the things that’s really come stood out with this tournament was the transition from ne-waza to tachi-waza as we’ve seen more time and more opportunities thanks to positive rule changes.

Also the transition from groundwork to standing has been important. As long as one person is up and in standing person, one with intent it has to be, intent is really the key word, to throw, the person on the ground is still in danger.

It’s great to see so many ippons and its moving judo forward. There’s now a really good balance between groundwork and tachi-waza.

I believe we have to push it at the lower levels. The interpretation here is fantastic with more time on ground and more ippons. This needs to be reflected in each country and all levels must be educated to apply this.

It’s very important for all referees at lower levels within their own countries to up skill, I have seen a difference at regional events and we have to promote these positive habits from the grassroots up.

After watching this weekend, where the rules were applied clearly and fairly, elite judoka know better than ever that they have to avoid negative actions and must be committed to tachi-waza and ne-waza and the transitions in between. If someone is coming up, this fair and there’s a lot to be excited about now for judo fans and for our sport at large.

*British legend Neil Adams is double Olympic silver medallist, 1981 world champion, five-time European champion and is ranked 9th Dan. IJF Commentator and Technical Adviser Adams, who is known as the ‘Voice of Judo’, moved into coaching after his remarkable competitive career and had spells with the Welsh Judo Association, British Judo Association and in Belgium.*

**Women
-78kg: Unfancied Russian SHMELEVA grinds out first IJF title**

Former Zagreb Grand Prix bronze medallist Antonina SHMELEVA (RUS) won her maiden IJF title to send her country top of the medal table in The Hague. Hohhot Grand Prix bronze medallist Sama Hawa CAMARA (FRA) came undone on the ground as the Russian secured a kesa-gatame hold and remained there for 20 seconds and -78kg gold. World number 27 CAMARA won her sixth Grand Prix medal but her wait goes on for an elusive gold but is still a young and developing talent for France.

In the first semi-final SHMELEVA defeated Glasgow European Open winner Ilona LUCASSEN (NED) by ippon for a place in the -78kg final.

In the second semi-final CAMARA blasted her way past Cancun Grand Prix bronze medallist Samanta SOARES (BRA) with an o-soto-gari for ippon on the edge of the contest area.

The first bronze medal contest was won by SOARES after Abu Dhabi Grand Slam bronze medallist MA Zhenzhao (CHN) was penalised with her third shido after four minutes of golden score. The scoreless contest ended when the Chinese passive and the world number 26 from Brazil claimed her third Grand Prix medal.

The second bronze medal was won by LUCASSEN who upstaged 2009 world champion Marhinde VERKERK (NED) by ippon after only 39 seconds. Dutch star VERKERK missed out Grand Prix medal number 11 as world number 78 LUCASSEN won her first at this level by throwing with a seoi-otoshi for the maximum score.

**Final**CAMARA, Sama Hawa (FRA) vs SHMELEVA, Antonina (RUS)

**Bronze Medal Fights**SOARES, Samanta (BRA) vs MA, Zhenzhao (CHN)
LUCASSEN, Ilona (NED) vs VERKERK, Marhinde (NED)

**Final Results**

1. SHMELEVA, Antonina (RUS)
2. CAMARA, Sama Hawa (FRA)
3. SOARES, Samanta (BRA)
3. LUCASSEN, Ilona (NED)
5. MA, Zhenzhao (CHN)
5. VERKERK, Marhinde (NED)
7. POWELL, Natalie (GBR)
7. STEVENSON, Karen (NED)

**+78kg:**  **Gold for Belarus as runner-up MBALLA ATANGANA clinches Cameroon’s first IJF World Judo Tour medal**

Tashkent Grand Prix bronze medallists Maryna SLUTSKAYA (BLR) bested African Championships bronze medallist Hortence Vanessa MBALLA ATANGANA (CMR) in the women’s heavyweight final. MBALLA ATANGANA starred in the preliminary rounds but the final was beyond her as the African contender was penalised three times and was disqualified. SLUTSKAYA topped an IJF medal podium for the third time after MBALLA ATANGANA was reprimanded for going out of the area.

In the first semi-final MBALLA ATANGANA saw off Abu Dhabi Grand Slam silver medallist Anne Fatoumata M BAIRO (FRA) by ippon with a seoi-nage after 14 seconds.

In the second semi-final SLUTSKAYA downed her fellow Tashkent Grand Prix bronze medallist Yelyzaveta KALANINA (UKR) by a waza-ari score to move on to the final.

The first bronze medal was awarded to world number two Larisa CERIC (BIH) won bronze at the World Championships in her last competition. CERIC saw KALANINA receive her third penalty for ducking to avoid the grip of her opponent in golden score and the Ukrainian was disqualified.

The second bronze medal was won by world number 16 M BAIRO who defeated Antalya Grand Prix bronze medallist Galyna TARASOVA (UKR) by ippon from a ko-soto-gake. World number 21 TARASOVA was sent over at the halfway point by M BAIRO who is one of a string of Tokyo 2020 hopefuls that France boasts in the +78kg category. The Olympic women’s heavyweight title currently belongs to France and the now retired Emilie ANDEOL (FRA) and the French federation will be aiming for a repeat in Japan in two years time.

**Final**SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR) vs MBALLA ATANGANA, Hortence Vanessa (CMR)

**Bronze Medal Fights**KALANINA, Yelyzaveta (UKR) vs CERIC, Larisa (BIH)
M BAIRO, Anne Fatoumata (FRA) vs TARASOVA, Galyna (UKR)

**Final Results**

1. SLUTSKAYA, Maryna (BLR)
2. MBALLA ATANGANA, Hortence Vanessa (CMR)
3. CERIC, Larisa (BIH)
3. M BAIRO, Anne Fatoumata (FRA)
5. KALANINA, Yelyzaveta (UKR)
5. TARASOVA, Galyna (UKR)
7. ADLINGTON, Sarah (GBR)
7. MARCHAND, Valentine (FRA)

**MEN
-90kg: World number KUKOLJ two defeats world champion for gold**

Ekaterinburg Grand Slam winner Aleksandar KUKOLJ (SRB) had the measure of world champion Nikoloz SHERAZADISHVILI (ESP) in the -90kg final as the anticipated and mouthwatering lived up to its expectations. KUKOLJ needed only 39 seconds to defeat the owner of the red backpatch at -90kg by ippon from a low seoi-otoshi. The two standouts of the category, shared a classy moment after their final as you expected from two men whose etiquette is absolutely exemplary on the tatami. World number two KUKOLJ, who prepared for the last Grand Prix of the year with a camp in Rio de Janeiro training alongside Brazil’s Flavio CANTO and David MOURA, closed the gap on the world number one with two IJF events left in 2018.

In the first semi-final SHERAZADISHVILI beat world number 37 Peter ZILKA (SVK) by two waza-ari scores without reply to ease into the gold medal contest.

In the second semi-final KUKOLJ defeated Agadir Grand Prix bronze medallist Joachim BOTTIEAU (BEL) with an uchi-mata for ippon after the Belgian stalled on the ground and the Serbian brought him up and over for the maximum score.

The first bronze medal was won by Hohhot Grand Prix bronze medallist Jesper SMINK (NED) who beat BOTTIEAU in a derby contest to open the final block. Home fighter SMINK prevailed by a waza-ari score from an ippon-seoi-nage in the ideal start to the medal portion of the day for the Netherlands.

The second bronze medal went to ZILKA who reached an IJF medal podium for the first time at the expense of Agadir Grand Prix bronze medallist Quedjau NHABALI (UKR). ZILKA threw for a waza-ari score and moved into osaekomi as he held down his Ukrainian opponent for 10 seconds to wrap up the best result of his career.

**Final**KUKOLJ, Aleksandar (SRB) vs SHERAZADISHVILI, Nikoloz (ESP)

**Bronze Medal Fights**BOTTIEAU, Joachim (BEL) vs SMINK, Jesper (NED)
ZILKA, Peter (SVK) vs NHABALI, Quedjau (UKR)

**Final Results**

1. KUKOLJ, Aleksandar (SRB)
2. SHERAZADISHVILI, Nikoloz (ESP)
3. SMINK, Jesper (NED)
3. ZILKA, Peter (SVK)
5. BOTTIEAU, Joachim (BEL)
5. NHABALI, Quedjau (UKR)
7. VAN T END, Noel (NED)
7. TCHRIKISHVILI, Avtandili (GEO)

**-100kg: Israel’s PALTCHIK wins back-to-back IJF gold medals to close on top spot**

Abu Dhabi Grand Slam winner Peter PALTCHIK (ISR) took -100kg gold to extend his winning run to nine consecutive contests on the IJF World Judo Tour. PALTCHIK has excelled this year and moved closer to the leading judoka in the category with a blistering display on Sunday. World number 36 SVIRYD claimed first IJF medal despite going over after 89 seconds of golden score from a seoi-nage before both men shared a lengthy embrace.

In the first semi-final Pan American Championships gold medallist Leonardo GONCALVES (BRA) lost out to SVIRYD by a waza-ari score.

In the second semi-final Paris Grand Slam winner Michael KORREL (NED) was rolled over by PALTCHIK for a waza-ari score to deny the Netherlands a place in the -100kg final.

The first bronze medal was won by KORREL after World Judo Masters bronze medallist CIRJENICS Miklos (HUN) managed to pick up three penalties after just two minutes. CIRJENICS stepped out to receive his final penalty after an insipid display as Dutchman KORREL looked shocked at the manner of his victory.

The second bronze medal went to GONCALVES who shaded Cancun Grand Prix bronze medallist Rafael BUZACARINI (BRA) by a single waza-ari score in a domestic duel which keeps the younger judoka at pole position for Tokyo 2020. World number 34 BUZACARINI was on the receiving end of a ura-nage from world number 26 GONCALVES which was the only score in the contest.

**Final**PALTCHIK, Peter (ISR) vs SVIRYD, Mikita (BLR)

**Bronze Medal Fights**KORREL, Michael (NED) vs CIRJENICS, Miklos (HUN)
BUZACARINI, Rafael (BRA) vs GONCALVES, Leonardo (BRA)

**Final Results**

1. PALTCHIK, Peter (ISR)
2. SVIRYD, Mikita (BLR)
3. KORREL, Michael (NED)
3. GONCALVES, Leonardo (BRA)
5. CIRJENICS, Miklos (HUN)
5. BUZACARINI, Rafael (BRA)
7. LIPARTELIANI, Varlam (GEO)
7. ZANKISHIEV, Kazbek (RUS)

**+100kg: Ukraine’s KHAMMO back to his best with first IJF title since 2016**

Former World Championships bronze medallist Yakiv KHAMMO (UKR) ruled the men’s heavyweight category as he defeated world number 39 Vladut SIMIONESCU (ROU) in the last contest of The Hague Grand Prix 2018. KHAMMO won his third Grand Prix title and his first since the Baku Grand Slam in 2016 as Ukraine added the heaviest title of the competition to the lightest title of the competition with the +100kg and +48kg gold medals set to found a new home in Ukraine. KHAMMO floored his Romanian rival with a forceful o-uchi-gari for the maximum score.

In the first semi-final world number 173 Vincenzo D ARCO (ITA) fell to a buzzer-beating uchi-mata from SIMIONESCU (ROU) which earned a waza-ari score to send the Romanian into the final.

In the second semi-final KHAMMO threw Glasgow European Open winner Jur SPIJKERS (NED) with an o-soto-gari for ippon.

The first bronze medal was won by four-time Grand Slam medallist Maciej SARNACKI (POL) who thwarted SPIJKERS with a majestic sasae-tsurikomi-ashi for ippon. SARNACKI, who took silver last year, scored after 56 seconds to block the hosts’ first medal opportunity in the +100kg category.

The second bronze medal went to 2017 winner Roy MEYER (NED) who bombarded D ARCO with attacks which led to the Italian picking up three penalties. It was one-way traffic from MEYER, who finished seventh at the Rio 2016 Olympics, as the Italian was off the pace and was penalised for passivity before clutching his injured right hand.

**Final**KHAMMO, Yakiv (UKR) vs SIMIONESCU, Vladut (ROU)

**Bronze Medal Fights**SPIJKERS, Jur (NED) vs SARNACKI, Maciej (POL)
MEYER, Roy (NED) vs D ARCO, Vincenzo (ITA)

**Final Results**

1. KHAMMO, Yakiv (UKR)
2. SIMIONESCU, Vladut (ROU)
3. SARNACKI, Maciej (POL)
3. MEYER, Roy (NED
5. SPIJKERS, Jur (NED)
5. D ARCO, Vincenzo (ITA)
7. KOLESNYK, Andrii (UKR)
7. MIKHAYLIN, Alexander (RUS)