

Algeria's favorite Imane Khelif won the best contest of the third session at the Women's World Boxing Championships

Description

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Boxers in the flyweight (52kg), featherweight (57kg), light welterweight (63kg) and middleweight (75kg) competed for the 1/8 final in the third session of the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships. Twenty-three winners celebrated their successes after this afternoon session in Istanbul. Algeria's Imane Khelif won the bout of the session against her technician Kazakh opponent proving she is a gold medal favorite.

Alana Portelli made the first surprise of the day

Spain's Maria Gonzalez joined their elite national team in 2019 following her first national title and has already won several international contests. She met in the first preliminary round of the flyweight (52kg) with Australia's Alana Portelli who is only 20-year-old and has less than 15 bouts in her entire career. The more diminutive boxer from Australia tried to go closer to the experienced Spanish but Gonzalez handled this tactical issue in the first round. The Spanish boxer's defensive skills looked better, however, Portelli was able to change her style in time and overturned their contest. The girl coming from down under won her first-ever international contest and made the first surprise of the session.

Jutamas Jitpong is Thailand's first winner at the Championships

Thailand's first boxer in action was Jutamas Jitpong who made her international debut at the New Delhi 2018 AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships where she won two contests. Back then, she was 20 but she's still young enough. During the last two years, she has impressively developed her level of technical and tactical skills, her success was based on continuous training in Muak Lek. Jitpong used her long hands in the first round against Kyrgyzstan's Shakhriza Khalilova and landed effective jabs. The only Kyrgyz competitor in Istanbul, who returned to the level of the World Championships after 10 years of hiatus, moved well and was competitive in the second round following her coach Mr. Akyikat Abayev's advice. Jitpong changed her rhythm once again and she was able to win this contest.

"I am so grateful that I have been selected to attend in these Championships and tried to make my nation proud today. I respected my opponent, she was good but I could follow the instructions of my coaches and that led to success," said Jitpong.

Kazakhstan opened the session with two triumphs

Kazakhstan's Zhaina Shekerbekova's excellent technical skills guaranteed the first success of the country in the third session of the Championships. The 2018 Women's World Boxing

Championships silver medalist was too quick for Puerto Rico's Melody Vargas in the flyweight (52kg) and joined the 1/8 final. The second Kazakh boxer in action during the session was Karina Ibragimova who achieved bronze in the same Championships in New Delhi as Shekerbekova. Ibragimova moved down to the featherweight (57kg) due to Rimma Volosenko's dominance in the lightweight (60kg) and she used her height advantage against Romania's Claudia Nechita. Ibragimova's opponent won her first contest in Istanbul on Day 1 but today she was not able to manage her tactical job, and the Kazakh boxer marched to the next preliminary round.

Colombia's Arias had a tough contest at the featherweight

Colombia's Yeni Marcela Arias was a gold medalist at the 2017 AMBC American Women's Boxing Championships, she has been competing in the intentional ring since 2011. The South American met with a younger sensation, Australia's new National Selection Tournament winner Tina Rahimi who is the first Muslim boxer in their squad. The Australian boxer made her international debut at this event, however, she looked confident in the first round despite her low number of contests. The Colombian featherweight (57kg) boxer met with strong resistance, Rahimi proved she is very talented with excellent technical skills. Arias put pressure on the Australian in the second round but both had the chance to win the contest after the first six minutes. The Colombian used all of her experience to beat the Australian newcomer and her aggressive boxing paid off.

"It was a complicated contest, more difficult than I expected but I could succeed. The first bout is never easy one but thanks for my coaches, I could manage this," added Arias.

Ireland's Michaela Walsh eliminated her US opponent

United States' Amelia Moore moved down two categories and achieved bronze medal at the AMBC American Elite Boxing Championships in Guayaquil five weeks ago. She had a hard opponent as a first one in Istanbul, Ireland's two-time Commonwealth Games silver medallist Michaela Walsh. This was definitely not a preliminary level contest. The 29-year-old Irish used similar gameplay as her star teammate, Kellie Harrington, and felt her distance well in the first round. Moore is taller than Walsh, she moved forward to catch the Irish girl during all of the three rounds but not effectively enough. Walsh's coach Mr. Zaur Antia built up the best strategy today, and the experienced Irish followed his advice.

“I hadn’t competed since last July so I enjoyed this comeback today. We had training camp with the US girls and I knew my rival well. It was not an easy contest but I eliminated my first opponent. It is always difficult for me. I claimed two silver medals in the previous editions of the Commonwealth Games and my goal is to get my first gold but this year but currently I am fully focused at the World Championships,” said Walsh.

Algeria’s favorite Imane Khelif won the best bout of the session

Algeria’s Imane Khelif is one of the gold medal favorites of the light welterweight (63kg). She has been winning all of her international contests since July 2021. The AFBC African Champion was a gold medallist at the Strandja Memorial Tournament and she is aiming for her nation’s biggest female success in Istanbul. She met with Kazakhstan’s Aida Abikeyeva who has been selected to attend Istanbul after her first elite national title. The North African was patient, she landed her punches with perfect timing and the best angles but Abikeyeva exceeded the expectations in their fight. The 23-year-old Khelif faced another talented boxer who had the same style, therefore, the Algerian was not able to reserve energy for the later actions. Khelif’s left hand was dangerous in the third round and she won this wonderful contest by unanimous decision.

“I moved up one category and I want to win this Championships in Istanbul. I could show my very best in the third round. I am looking forward to my next fight at the event,” commented her success Algeria’s boxer.