

Cyprus' Rafail Pafios had a strong performance at the Commonwealth Games on Day2

Description

Further eighteen preliminary contests were held on the second day in the boxing event of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England today. Cyprus sent only two boxers to the new edition of the Commonwealth Games but Rafail Pafios has done a fantastic job against his Oceanian rival, advancing to the next preliminary round.

The Commonwealth Games is one of the top multisport events next to the Olympic Games and European Games and after four years of break, the competition returned to the agenda. Altogether 231 boxers from 55 out of the 72 participating NOCs are competing in the boxing event of the new Commonwealth Games from all of the five Confederations. The finals of the Commonwealth Games will be held in Birmingham on August 7.

The bout of the day

Cyprus' Rafail Pafios boxed at the Mediterranean Games and several other events in the previous one year which all were preparations for the Commonwealth Games. The Cyprian light middleweight (71kg) boxer landed better shots than Cook Islands' Tawhiri Toheriri-Hallett who lives and trains in New Zealand and returned to his roots. Pafios landed a powerful left-handed hook in the end of the first round and the Oceanian boxer went down to the floor. The Cyprian continued his strong performance but Toheriri-Hallett survived the most dangerous moments in this Round of 32 contest. Pafios won the contest unanimously and will now meet with Tanzania's Kassim Mbundwike in the next stage.

The surprise of the day

Nigeria's Bolanle Temitope Shogbamu is the current All Africa Games winner and she was more experienced than England's Jodie Wilkinson in their meeting at the light middleweight (70kg). The Nigerian girl trains with her husband Waheed who represented the African country in several top championships and arrived in Birmingham as a secret favourite. She faced England's Jodie Wilkinson in the Round of 16 and opened the first round better than the local pride. Wilkinson worked in a call centre but she decided to work hard in the boxing gyms to reach the national team and she gave in everything in

this contest today. The English girl had only 25 contests during her entire career but she delivered a sensational performance today and eliminated the Nigerian boxer with punctual shots.

The Round-Up

England's Lewis Williams claimed a silver medal at the 2019 EUBC U22 European Boxing Championships in Vladikavkaz and bagged bronze in Yerevan among the elite boxers this May. The English heavyweight (92kg) boxer performed highly confidently in front of his family and relatives during his debuting contest at the Commonwealth Games. Williams was quite taller than Pakistan's two-time National Champion Nazeerullah Khan and used his longer hands effectively in this contest. Khan moved forward more aggressively in the second round which was perfect for Williams who danced through the whole ring to keep the Pakistani opponent on long. The 24-year-old English opened the third round with tough shots and he was better in all aspects of boxing than Khan.

Northern Ireland's Jude Gallagher was bronze medallist at the Budapest 2018 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships and joined the elite age group only in January 2020. Ulster's new young sensation had the height advantage against Eswatini's Zweli Comfort Dlamini who came from a strong boxing family. Gallagher had the advantage after three minutes in all of the judges' scorecards but Dlamini moved forward continuously and tried to work from closer distance against the taller Northern Irishman. Gallagher danced through the ring and his smart boxing delivered for him a place in the last 16 but he looked fresh after the contest.

The quotes of the day

"I am absolutely a local boy and all of my relatives and friends were here in the competition venue. They arranged for me a fantastic atmosphere today, I was happy to fight here in England. This first bout was an exercise for me, a warm-up for the next part of the Commonwealth Games. I was expecting that New Zealand's David Nyika would be here and I could beat him in the final but hopefully we can fight in the next event. I will try to repeat this performance in my next bout," added England's Lewis Williams to his opening success.

"This is my first major senior championship and I am excited to be here at the Commonwealth Games. We don't know our opponent well enough therefore I used my own game play to keep the control. I would like to go to the final bouts in Birmingham," said Jude Gallagher shortly after his contest.

“This is a fantastic feeling that I started with a success in the Commonwealth Games. I was not expecting that I will knock down my opponent today but I believe in faith and I am ready to get a medal here,” added Cyprus’ Rafail Pafios in the mixed zone.

