

Aidan Walsh won the most difficult bout of the quarter-finals at the Commonwealth Games

Description

The second part of the quarter-finals took place at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England on Day 7. The best boxer from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland all impressed in the seventh competition day.

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

Northern Ireland's Aidan Walsh achieved a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games and a silver in the last edition of the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast. The 25-year-old boxer had a brilliant opening in Birmingham but he could not expect an easy fight as he had to meet England's defending light middleweight (71kg) European Champion, Mohammed Harris Akbar. Walsh used his patient style from the first seconds and landed single shots with perfect timing. The Northern Irish boxer followed his impressive game plan and tried to keep Akbar on long in all of the three rounds. The English star felt the support of the local environment, he increased his speed continuously but Walsh had the perfect style to beat the reigning EUBC European Champion.

The Round-Up

Michaela Walsh is the flag bearer of the Northern Irish team, she achieved two silver medals in the previous editions of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and in Gold Coast. She is the one of the main gold medal contenders of the women's featherweight (57kg) in Birmingham and Walsh impressed during her quarter-final. She had a tall rival, Botswana's All Africa Games winner Keamogetse Sadie Kenosi but Walsh was quicker in their contest and reduced the fighting distance successfully. The Northern Irish boxer performed fantastically in the first round and her impressive start demoralized Kenosi

therefore Walsh managed to go to the semi-finals.

England's first boxer in action during the seventh competition day was AIBA Youth World Champion and two-time EUBC European Youth Champion Gemma Richardson at the women's lightweight (60kg). She is relatively small in this category but she has the speed, technique, and strength to control her contests. The English hope dominated the first round against Isle of Man's Jade Burden and the second was her best in their quarter-final. Richardson won her bout easily and joined the last four joining to several of her teammates such as heavyweight (92kg) Lewis Williams, who stopped Papua New Guinea's Arthur Lavalou in Birmingham. Richardson celebrated her 21st birthday with a perfect success today and a medal from the Games.

Wales' EUBC European Men's Elite Boxing Championships bronze medallist Ioan Croft had brilliant performance during his road to the quarter-finals at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The Welsh welterweight (67kg) boxer is in fantastic shape just in time in his most important competition and he was in absolutely different level in the quarter-final. His 19-year-old rival from Malawi, Lewis Zakeyu Mbewe had only a few international contests until today and they have never met against such top quality rival as Croft. The Welsh talent landed shots from all of the possible angles and ranges and following the third count, the Canadian referee stopped their bout.

Ioan's twin brother, Garan Croft was expecting a tough battle against Mauritius' All Africa Games winner and two-time Olympian Mervin Clair in the quarter-finals of the light middleweight (71kg). The Welsh boxer is eight-years younger than his Mauritian rival but he had dozens of the international contests from the previous four years. Clair was relaxed in the first round, landed his shots with perfect timing therefore the Welsh ringside switched Garan's rhythm after three minutes. The 20-year-old Croft was super confident in the second and third rounds, he knew what to do against the Mauritian star and his emerging performance guaranteed a semi-final spot for him.

Northern Ireland's Amy Broadhurst is not only a fantastic talent in our sport but she is the defending IBA Women's World Champion at the light welterweight (63kg). She moved down to the lightweight (60kg) and dictated the high rhythm against Zambia's Felistus Nkandu at the quarter-finals. Broadhurst is still small in this weight class but she has the experience how to handle this tactical situation. The Irish star was never stopped attacking and she has all of her skills to dominate this quarter-final.

The quotes of the day

"Feeling great after my win today. This was the best birthday present I could wish for myself. Felt in control throughout the entire bout and I am ready to the next one here in the Games,"

said England's Gemma Richardson following her easy success.

"I felt really focused today, I was in control at all times and I am pleased with the stoppage. I have a day off tomorrow then I will be prepared for the semi-finals," said Wales' loan Croft following his quarter-final match.

"I was very pleased with my performance today. I felt composed against a very difficult opponent today and delivered the best game plan. I am so happy that both me and loan have guaranteed medals in Birmingham," added the 20-year-old Garan Croft who marched to the semi-finals.

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