

Americans Advance to Top 16

Contributed by Craig Harkins
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All three Americans advance to the round of 16 in the women's sabre event. Jacobson and Zagunis advance outright and Ward advances on an injury withdrawal when her opponent pulled a muscle in her arm.

Sada Jacobson started her first bout off close at 3-2 before running off a couple of points to 5-2. Gonzalez draws Sada down the strip and turns the corner with an attack to close to 3-5. Sada responds for 6-3. At 6-4 they jockey for position before Sada takes over on the attack - 7-4. A couple of quick touches by Gonzales bring it to 6-7. A first attack short, then reset for a second attack good brings Sada into the break up 8-6.

Sada takes the first two points of the second period to go up by 4 touches 10-6. Another blistering attack brings it to 11. An attack by Sada and then a riposte by Gonzalez and it is 12-7. They trade touches until 11-14 and then Sada closes it out with an attack.

Commenting on her victory, Sada stated "I think the first bout is always a tough bout for me (because I'm) getting into the flow of the competition. It was a different flow from normal with the video replay and it took some getting used to."

Mariel Zagunis fended off Sassine of Canada in what was a closely contested match. Sassine went up 3-0 and then held onto a one point lead at the break. Down 8-9 Zagunis rallied with 6 straight touches to a commanding 14-9 lead. She then traded points with Sassine to win 15-10.

Becca Ward took an early lead on Navarro to lead by 4 at the break. At 12-7 an injury stopped play as medical staff worked on Navarro. Unable to continue, Navarro withdraws and all three Americans advance to the top 16.

Commenting on the upsets, Ward showed some surprise that both Touya and Perrus lost, but said she will have to focus on her opponents since they were already able to pull off an upset.

Velikaya advances with a 15-7 victory.

On the blue piste Wieckowska of Poland has tied it up at 11 with Nechaeva. Wieckowska seals the victory late.

The green piste has another upset brewing as Besbes of Tunisia is up 11-9 on Perrus, then follows up a missed attack with a remise to make it 12-9. Perrus makes it 10-12 then loses on a close attack-counter call. 13-10. Besbes gets red carded after earning her 14th point and Perrus takes a break to fix her hair. Besbes is sure her attack at 14-11 was good, but the referee gives it to Perrus, stating that Besbes was searching for the blade. On video replay, the point and victory is awarded to Besbes who falls kneeling on the strip to a chorus of catcalls from the French contingent.

The first Chinese fencers make the way to the piste with huge cheers from the crowd. The first two points by the Chinese fencer Huang against Italy's Bianco are greeted with huge cheers. (Bau doesn't get as many cheers as her opponent is from Hong Kong.) Though the crowd is a factor, Bianco holds on to lead the bout at the break and hold on to the lead. Huang energizes the crowd with 3 points in a row to bring it to 12-14 before Bianco scores the last touch.

In other bouts, Bao advances with a 15-5 victory. Kharlan defeats Marzocca 15-8 and Ovtchinnikova (CAN) defeats Lee (Kor) 15-13.