

Top Seeds Advance in Women's Foil

Contributed by Craig Harkins
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An Olympics that saw significant upsets in the first two days of competition settled down today as all top 4 seeds advanced to the semifinal rounds in the women's foil competition in Beijing. In fact, all of the quarterfinal matches were decided by 5 or more points and Vezzali crushed 10th seed Knapek (HUN) 15-3.

Earlier in the day the US women all lost their matches in the round of 32. Fencers Hanna Thompson and Erinn Smart won opening round matches but Emily Cross never got comfortable in her first bout, a top 32 match against China's Wanwen Su. Su, pumped up by a roaring crowd, took over the bout in the 2nd period and won 15-7.

Thompson lost to Germany's Caroline Golubitsky 13-5 and Smart fell to French foilist Corinne Maitrejean 15-9.

The round of 32 featured only 3 bouts decided by 5 or fewer points and only 2 upsets. The highlight of the round was a win by Aida Shanaeva (RUS) as she survived a late push by Sylwia Gruchala (POL) to win 12-11 in overtime.

In the round of 16 the fencing tightened up with 5 of the 8 bouts being close and resulting in 3 upsets. The cinderella story of the day was Katja Waechter of Germany who advanced to the top 8 despite a #24 seed. The magic would end, however, as she faced off against Giovanna Trillini and lost 15-8 in the quarters.

Japan's Chieko Sugawara battled to a 6-5 overtime win against Golubitsky (GER) but would fall in the next round 15-10 to Korea's Nam Hyunhee.

In the last quarterfinal match to complete, Margherita Granbassi frustrated Lamonova (RUS) and took a 12-7 win. Granbassi spent a good part of the end of the match on the floor as she would pull back to her end line and end up sitting down as she attempted a ducking parry of Lamonova's attacks. The tactic worked, however, and a frustrated Lamonova will have to take solace in 6th place.

The Italian victories set the stage for a sweep of the medals. If Trillini defeats Hyunhee in the first match of the evening's semi-finals, then the Italians will match the United States women's feat of a medal sweep.