

## Kleibrink Foils Ota for Gold

Contributed by Craig Harkins  
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Benjamin Kleibrink entered the semi finals carrying the hopes of Germany for the gold medal. Earlier in the day the gold medal favorite and 3 time world champion Peter Joppich was eliminated by Kleibrink's foe, Japan's Yuki Ota. Kleibrink exited as the gold medal winner after defeating Ota 15-9 in the 2008 Olympic Men's Foil event. The 6th ranked German dominated the gold medal bout from the start as he led the bout 1-0. Ota tied the bout at 1-1 which ended up the closest he would get to the gold.

Kleibrink used a dazzling combination of attacks, counter-attacks, and ripostes to confuse the Japanese fencer and negate any advantage in speed he may have had. Every time that the Japanese fencer would come at Kleibrink, the German would close distance and execute a myriad of infighting moves. Twice in the bout Kleibrink would hit Ota on a riposte after the Japanese fencer had run past.

{sidebar id=1} During the semi final round of fencing, Ota used his speed to take out 6th seed Salvatore Sanzo (ITA). Every time that the Italian would set up an attack, he seemed to be looking at Ota's blade. Ota finished that bout 15-14 after being tied late at 11 all. Ota's other victories included Joao Souza (BRA) 15-4, Byungchul Choi (KOR), and Peter Joppich (GER) 15-12.

In the bronze medal bout, Salvatore Sanzo had to use everything in his arsenal to hold off Ju Zhu's upset bid. Sanzo won the match 15-14. Zhu, who earlier had knocked out #1 seed and world #3 Andrea Cassara, was driven off the end of the strip to go down 0-2 in the beginning of the bronze medal bout.

The Chinese fencer would fight back, however, and pulled himself back up to tie the bout at 9-9. He would continue on the run and extend a 3 point lead over Sanzo, capping off a 5-0 run. Sanzo is able to make another adjustment and the two fencers battle out each point until, at 14 all, Sanzo launches a final attack that lands good.

Earlier bouts for Sanzo included Josh McGuire (CAN) 15-3, Erwann le Pechoux (FRA) 15-9, and a 15-14 loss to gold medalist Yuki Ota (JAP). Jun Zhu bested Alberto Gonzalez Viaggio (ARG) 15-2, Gerek Meinhardt (USA) 15-9, and Andrea Cassara (ITA) 15-14 before losing 4-15 to gold medalist Kleibrink.

US fencer Gerek Meinhardt, the youngest in the men's foil field, finished 10th. He leaves for college at Notre Dame when he returns to the United States.