

Heidemann Wins Epee Gold

Contributed by Craig Harkins
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Britta Heidemann added to Germany's medal count today as she joined fellow fencer Benjamin Kleibrink with a gold medal for fencing. Heidemann won the women's epee event by defeating #2 seed Ana Maria Branza (ROU) 15-11. The 2007 world champion started out with a score on Branza just 32 seconds into the epee match. She would continue to dominate the bout throughout as her opponent would get no closer than 2 points, including a 4-0 start to the bout.

Entering the third and final period of fencing Branza was down 4 points, 8-12. She would rally to bring the score to 10-12 but then Heidemann closed the door with the last three hits to win the gold medal 15-11 on a double touch at the end.

{sidebar id=1}When asked about fencing Heidemann, Branza retorted "She fenced like a man, really." Heidemann's response? "I don't care about how I fence. Everyone knows I'm athletic compared with other girls. I take it as an advantage. I'm happy that I 'fence like a man'."

Branza's earlier victories included Ildiko Mincza-Nebald (HUN) 15-14, Liubov Sutova (RUS) 15-13, and Megumi Harada (JPN) 15-11. Heidemann's earlier matches included Li Na (CHN) 15-13, Emma Samuelsson (SWE) 15-10 and Hyo Jung Jung (KOR) 12-5.

Bronze Medal Bout

Ildiko Mincza (HUN) started off the bronze medal bout with a 1-0 lead and then quickly fell behind 3-1 to Ni Li of China. During the first period Ni built a 2 point lead to start the 2nd of 3 fencing periods up by a score of 5-2. In the second period the fencing got frantic as Ni built up a 5 point lead. Down 3-8, Mincza steadily climbed back into the bout before tying the bout at 9 all.

As the third and final period began, Li found herself again in control with a one point lead. Mincza would tie the bout at 11 and then score the next point to give her the first lead of the bout since 1-0. On the next touch Li lunges for Mincza's toe, but the Hungarian's counterattack lands first. Mincza would close out the bout with scores on a riposte and then a fleche attack to win 15-11.

Mincza, the 11th seed, upset 6th seed Sherraine Schalm (CAN) 15-13 in the round of 16. Her victories also included bouts against Chui Ling Yeung (HKG) 15-11, and 3rd seed Imke Duplitzer (GER) 15-11.

Earlier in the day, US fencer Kelley Hurley lost her first match to Korea's Jung Jung Hyo. Hurley had been fighting a stomach virus that morning and had no energy left for the match. "I was totally not prepared for that match" said Hurley. "I was throwing up all morning. I had no energy left after the first period."

Though disappointed in the result and unfortunate timing of her illness, Kelley is looking towards the future. "It's the first (Olympics) but hopefully not the last. (My goal is) to qualify for the team for London."