



International Shooting Sport Federation
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Odds-defying final closes day-2 of the ISSF World Cup in Baku (AZE)

Gian Marco Berti of San Marino – ranked 90th in the world – beat Trap World Champion Erik Varga to win his country its first world cup gold medal ever in a men event. Ukraine’s Olena Kostevych claimed the women’s 10m Air Pistol Gold, while a 16-year old first-time finalist rocked the following men’s 10m Air Rifle final.

Day-2 of the ISSF Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, ended-up in an odds-defying final, as San Marino’s Gian Marco Berti, ranked 90th in the world, climbed atop of the podium beating the reigning world champion Erik Varga of Slovakia.

Berti qualified with 121 hits out of 125 targets, and led the semi-final with 14 hits, making it into the gold medal match where he faced Varga, the winner of the 2014 and 2015 ISSF World Championships, currently ranked fourth in the world. Berti shot consistently through the gold medal match, missing only one target to finish tied to Varga with 14 hits out of 15 targets. The two athletes advanced to a shoot-off, which was decided in favor of San Marino’s Berti at the 10th target, when Varga missed putting himself in second. The Bronze medal went to Poland’s 28-year old first-time finalist Piotr Kowalczyk, who beat France’s Herve Boivin, 43, by 14 to 11 hits.

Berti, a law student, had never won an ISSF medal, before. His best world cup finish in career had been a 63rd place recorded in Nicosia, in 2013. Just two weeks ago, competing on his home turf at the ISSF World Cup in San Marino, he had closed the event in 81st place.

“Today’s is the match of my life,” he said. “I am speechless. Going into the medal match against such an established champion like Varga, gave me the motivation to shoot at my best, to prove to myself that I can make it.”

San Marino has gained three Olympic quota places for Rio 2016, probably a record for a small nation that can count on a pool of 31-thousand citizens only to select its team. Two quotas were won by the Perilli sisters, which have already booked their tickets to Rio, to compete in the women’s Trap event. One was collected by Stefano Selva in the men’s Trap event at last year’s ISSF World Championship in Lonato, with a 5th place finish.

But Berti’s performance could turn the tables: will he get a chance to compete in Rio instead of Selva? “I don’t know, I don’t want to think about it right now. That’s a decision of my coach Luca Di Mari,” he commented, wearing San Marino’s first world cup gold medal ever won in a men event.

Earlier today, the 2004 Olympic Champion Olena Kostevych of the Ukraine, 31, secured Gold at the women’s 10m Air Pistol final with 200.2 points beating Greece’s Anna Korakaki (silver with

199.1 points) and Mexico's Alejandra Zavala Vazquez (bronze with 175.9 points).

At the following men's 10m Air Rifle final, it was Filip Nepejchal, a 16-year old first-time finalist from the Czech Republic ranked 117th in the world, who pocketed the brightest medal with 206.8 points thanks to a 10.7 on his last shot. Iran's 34-year old finalist Hossein Bagheri followed him in second with 206.2 points, while Bronze went to Israel's 2013 European Champion Sergey Richter, 27, with 184.6 points.

The ISSF World Cup in Baku, which sees 640 athletes coming from 80 nations competing in the 15 Olympic shooting events from the 20th through the 29th of June, will continue tomorrow with the men's 50m Pistol and the women's 10m Air Rifle competitions. Find the complete schedule and follow the matches on www.issf-sports.org

Results: <http://goo.gl/CcCJuh>

Events photos: <https://goo.gl/zTV36y>

Events videos: <https://www.youtube.com/issfchannel>

Notes for the editors:

The International Shooting Sport Federation is the governing body of the Olympic Shooting events, and it has over 160 affiliated National Federations worldwide. Shooting is an Olympic sport since the very first edition of the modern Olympic Games, Athens 1896. Find out more about the International Shooting Sport Federation at www.issf-sports.org.

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