The draw to decide the semi-final pairings in the WSB was made by AIBA President and WSB Chairman of the Board Dr C. K. Wu on March 21 in Lausanne.

The three conference champions had all been confirmed in the penultimate week of the regular season but the remaining slot, that of the best second placed team across all three conferences, was decided on the final weekend.

The Astana Arlans had a clear advantage over their main rival, Dolce & Gabbana Milano Thunder, but things were far from certain heading into the last weekend of conference action. In the end Milan’s 4-1 home win against the already-qualified Paris United was not enough to catch the Arlans, whose close 3-2 win over the Pohang Poseidons secured the last remaining place in the final four.

The Astana Arlans will face the Los Angeles Matadors first at home and then away. The first semi-final matches will take place over the weekend of April 8-9 and the second legs will be held the following week on April 15-16. The teams must use a full squad of ten boxers across their two semi-finals.

The two winning teams will then meet in Guiyang, China on May 6-7 to decide the 2010-2011 World Series of Boxing Team Champion. Two weeks later, WSB action returns to the same city for the Individual Championships, which will be contested over seven rounds of three minutes.

Paris United were the first team to be drawn and will face Baku Fires for their home and away semi-finals. The team were also drawn for the right to choose their preferred order of matches and opted for their home match in the second week.
NEWS FROM AIBA

AIBA DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION LIFTS SUSPENSION
OF DUTCH BOXING ASSOCIATION

The AIBA Disciplinary Commission has lifted the provisional suspension of the Dutch Boxing Association after completing its investigation into irregularities and rule violations related to the organization of the so-called Final Four tournament last year. The Dutch Boxing Association is sanctioned with a fine of 2000 Swiss francs, plus 1000 Swiss francs costs.

In a submission of March 7, 2011 the DBA fully recognized that “it has committed a serious violation of the AIBA Technical & Competition Rules and Ethics Code”. Measures have since been taken to ensure that such problems will not occur in future and the DBA is preparing a statement for its website, in Dutch and English, to report the mistake made and state its apologies to AIBA and the world of boxing.

AIBA DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION SUSPENDS ROMANIAN BOXING FEDERATION

In its decision of March 25 the AIBA Disciplinary Commission suspended the Romanian Boxing Federation (RBF) from any activity at AIBA, Continental and other international levels, for a period of two years. This suspension does not apply to coaches, athletes and referees & judges.

The RBF was furthermore sanctioned with a fine of CHF 5000 and shall pay the costs of the procedure (CHF 2500).

In its findings, the Disciplinary Commission concluded that Mr Rudel Obreja, former president of the RBF, who was suspended on 13 January 2009 by the then AIBA Disciplinary Commission (partly confirmed by CAS) and further suspended for 5 years according to a decision of 6 February 2010 by the then AIBA Appeal Commission, continues to be considered as president of the RBF.

The RBF failed to elect a new president, despite promising to do so on October 27, 2010 and in spite of a request by AIBA, dated December 2, 2010, to elect a new president within two months.

Therefore, the Disciplinary Commission considered that the RBF has seriously breached Art. 3 and 46 of the AIBA Disciplinary Code (the Code) in failing to respect AIBA final decisions, in particular the decisions suspending Mr Obreja and the decisions urging it to settle down under a proper - not suspended - leadership. The RBF has also had a “behavior which harms the image of boxing, AIBA, its Confederations or Members”, according to Art. 4 of the Code (acting through a person who is suspended harms the image of boxing; (Art. 47 of the Code). Therefore, sanctions must be imposed (Art. 5 of the Code).

Since suspending the RBF as a whole would prevent many boxers and coaches from competing at international level and referees & judges from participating in international events, the Disciplinary Commission found that the sanction must only affect the RBF officials. Under a practical point of view, this means that Romanian competitors will be allowed to attend international competitions with their coaches, but without RBF officials (they may for example be accompanied by Romanian NOC staff). Romanian referees & judges will be allowed to participate in international events, if they are selected by the competent bodies.

AIBA DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION SUSPENDS GENERAL JANTARAROJ AND BANS ABAT OFFICIALS

In a decision of March 25, the AIBA Disciplinary Commission suspended Gen. Taweep Jantararoj from any activity at AIBA, Continental, other international and National (Amateur Boxing Association of Thailand, ABAT) levels, for a period of 24 months.

Furthermore, ABAT officials (all ABAT representatives, except for athletes, coaches and referees & judges: President, Secretary General, Vice-President, Executive Committee Member, Secretary, Treasurer and anyone who holds a titled ABAT governance position, to include all board members) are barred from any activity at AIBA, Continental and other international levels for a period of 12 months and no official representing the ABAT shall be allowed to take part in any such activity for the same period.

The decision relates to Gen. Taweep’s and the ABAT’s involvement as the senders of misleading e-mails to certain AIBA national federations with fake registration forms for the 2010 AIBA Congress.

Read the full article on the AIBA website.
IABA TO HOST EUROPEAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) will host the 2011 European Youth Championships in Dublin in August.

Tommy Murphy, the President of the IABA, confirmed that the tournament would be held in Ireland’s capital between August 22nd and 28th.

“We are delighted to announce that we will be hosting the 2011 European Youth Championships and that the cream of up and coming amateur boxing talent will be coming to Ireland to compete in this prestigious tournament,” said the IABA President.

“The 2011 European Youth Championships will give our young boxers the opportunity to measure themselves against the best in Europe in their own country.

Humbert Furgoni, President of the European Boxing Confederation, said that they were confident that the IABA and Irish Sports Council will organize the 2011 Championships in a very professional manner in the year which marks the IABAs 100th birthday.

“We are happy to know that the Irish Association with its strong boxing tradition and recent international success will host this important event in the year of the 100th anniversary of its creation, said Furgoni.

“We remain confident that the IABA and Irish Sports Council will manage to organize the competition at a very professional level and that the city of Dublin will be the perfect venue for the European Youth Championships 2011.”

KAYA AND HASSAN SHOWED THEIR CLASS AT THE NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

Two Swedish boxers, Redouane Kaya and Bashir Hassan, stood out at the Nordic Championships at Lahti. The tournament was contested 26-27 March.

Kaya was chosen as the best boxer of the tournament, receiving a painting made by the former Finnish champion Teemu Kaski. The powerful Swede dominated the 60 kg class, beating Rashid Kassem of Denmark in the final by 10-7.

Hassan outboxed Denmark’s Dennis Ceylan in the 56 kg final. The final score was 10-4 for the skillful Swedish speedster.

Host nation Finland ruled the highest weight categories. Experienced Eemeli Katajisto took gold at 81 kg, hometown favorite Sami Enbom was the clear victor at 91 kg and Kaspar Vaha was in a class of his own at +91 kg.

Danish men took their three gold medals in the middle weight divisions. Puriya Haidari was the best at 64 kg, Torben Keller won at 69 kg and Stephen Alms was the surprise victor at 75 kg.

The only Norwegian winner at elite men was the big-punching youngster Ali Srour who beat hometown boxer Ibrahim Mohammad convincingly 16-3.

The biggest surprise of the tournament took place at elite women. Marielle V. Hansen of Norway beat Finland’s AIBA World Championships bronze medalist Hanne Mäkinen at the 51 kg final by 9-5. Mäkinen had beaten the Swedish European champion Jenny Hardingz in the semifinal easily 6-1.

Hardingz’s defeat aside, Sweden dominated the women’s competition, claiming five out of seven gold medals. The winners were Maja Strömberg (48 kg), Linnea Strandell (54 kg), Natalie Nielsen (57 kg), Helana Falk (60 kg) and Anna Laurell (75 kg). Newcomer Cecilia Nilsson of Finland was the best at 64 kg.

Report by Mikko Marttinen
DOMINICAN NEW WAVE CROWNED IN CUMANA

The Dominican Republic’s new wave was crowned at the 1st Panamerican Games Qualifier in Cumana, Venezuela where the tournament finished with some great battles.

Dominican Republic’s La Romana Cup winner 18-year-old Juan Gabriel Medina followed his great victories during the event by overpowering Puerto Rico’s newcomer Jantony Ortiz in the light flyweight class final.

Medina’s teammate and friend Panamerican Junior Champion Dagoberto Aguero notched up the greatest victory in his career so far against Youth Olympic Games winner Robeisy Ramirez of Cuba in the flyweight final in Cumana and secured the Dominican Republic’s second gold, at the same time joining the top flyweight boxers in the world.

Cuba’s 19-year-old Lazaro Alvarez won the bantamweight class in Cumana after the closest final of the event. The scoring finished in a 6:6 draw but Alvarez was the lucky winner and secured Cuba’s first gold medal at the Qualifiers.

Cuba won its second gold medal in the next weight class when two-time Panamerican Champion Yasnier Toledo triumphed over Venezuela’s AIBA Youth World Championships bronze medalist 18-year-old Fradimil Macayo in their close bout.

The light welterweight class saw the dream final between reigning AIBA World Champion Rosniel Iglesias and Brazil’s AIBA World Championships quarterfinalist Everton Lopes. In their hectic final bout the Caribbean boxer defeated his rival by 9:5 and continued Cuba’s winning series at the Qualifiers.

Argentina’s rising power 21-year-old Brian Castano defeated top welterweight boxers en route to the final but the young South American fighter fell to Venezuela’s surprise Gabriel Maestre in another close final fight.

There was no pardon at the middleweight class where Olympic Games silver medalist and World Championships bronze medalist Emilio Correa of Cuba thrashed Venezuela’s new hope Juan Carlos Rodriguez in the final and secured his top place in the continent.

In the light heavyweight class Cuba’s 21-year-old Julio Cesar de la Cruz, who was included in the national squad in 2008, won the Qualifiers and achieved the best result of his career. The Cuban boxer beat AMBC’s best boxer Carlos Gongora from Ecuador in the final.

Youth Olympic Games winner and AIBA Youth World Champion Leinier Perot had enough experience to beat Ecuador’s defending Panamerican Champion 22-year-old Julio Castillo in the heavyweight division in Cumana. The 19-year-old Cuban boxer eliminated his best rivals in the continent and may well go on to get some great results in the upcoming elite events.

Read the full article on the AIBA website.

AIBA PRESIDENT VISITS DOHA FOR THE 27TH ARAB ELITE MEN’S BOXING CHAMPIONSHIP

This year’s Arab Boxing Championships were hosted by the Qatar Boxing Federation in Doha. The success of the tournament was guaranteed by the number of the countries participating in the event: UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, and host nation Qatar.

This is a remarkable achievement considering the fact that the event coincided with one of the most difficult times for the Arab countries due to the uprisings and revolutions that have inflamed the Maghreb, the Middle-East and Egypt, which for instance did not take part in the competition.

A total of 85 boxers competed fiercely during the 5-day event, displaying a good level of boxing. The finals of the 10 weight categories saw 20 contenders from 7 different countries competing for the gold medals: 3 from Syria, 3 from Algeria, four from Morocco, four from Tunisia, three from Jordan, two from Iraq and one from Kuwait.

President Wu attended the sports event during the semifinals and the finals, while Mr Gofur Rakhimov, AIBA Vice-President and President of the Asian Confederation, attended the finals.
Reigning World and European Champion Artur Beterbiyev of Russia, who picked up the AIBA award as best boxer of 2010, continued his successful era at the Great Silk Way Tournament, which was held in Azerbaijan’s capital city, Baku on March 12-13.

Beterbiyev advanced to the final and won the gold medal on a walkover as his 18-year-old opponent, Bocskai Memorial Tournament winner Teymur Mammadov, was unable to compete against him.

Azerbaijan organized its fourth major event in recent times after the AIBA President’s Cup in 2009, the AIBA Youth World Championships and Heydar Aliyev Cup in 2010 but their major work will be in late September when Baku will welcome athletes to what promises to be the biggest-ever boxing tournament, the AIBA World Championships. European Championships bronze medalist Ferhat Pehlivan claimed only a bronze medal at the Turkish National Championships in December but eliminated his biggest rival in the squad, Erdal Inanli, in Baku. He also won his final on a walkover in the light flyweight division because his rival, local European Championships silver medalist Elvin Mamishzade, was unable to take to the ring.

Azerbaijan’s newcomer at international level, Tural Ahmadov, triumphed over AIBA Youth World Champion Shaban Shahpalangov by 3:0 in the preliminaries and advanced to the flyweight final, where he won against his compatriot 17-year-old Ramal Yusifzade.

Madi Shulakov returned to the world of boxing after a long break last year and was crowned at the Kazakh National Championships in February. He continued his winning series in Baku as well as the 26-year-old boxer defeated a WSB competitor, Baku Fires’ Rahim Najafov of Azerbaijan, by 7:4 in the bantamweight final.

Read the full article on the AIBA website.

The 600 strong crowd at the Time Capsule were treated to a thrilling night of boxing at the Scottish Championship Senior Finals on Friday night.

Setting the tone for the evening was a fast paced opening bout that saw Katie Atkin of Granite City ABC take the Women’s 60kg title by just two points in beating Louise Mitchell. Stephanie Kernachan of Newarthill made it a west coast double by beating Magdalen Berns of Leith Victoria to take the other Women’s title.

In the Men’s, Joe Ham kept up the momentum in a stylish victory over David Dickson of Lochend.

In a closer bout, James Cunningham of Dennistoun McNair edged the 81kg title with some very clever boxing against the larger, heavy hitter Scott Hartley of Alloa ABC. At heavyweight Kevin Bruce went back to Fife a King as he won his third title in a row in three different divisions, defeating Lochend’s young Steven Nicol.

Aston Brown highlighted his GB potential coming out on top in a close bout with Matthew McAllister and Barrhead’s Brian Peacock ran out a convincing winner for the Middleweight title against Glenrothes’ Andrew McKelvie. Narrowest win went to Callum Susans who won the light welterweight title by a single point following a countback against Cleland’s Darren McGinn.

Ross Henderson won comprehensively after a slow tentative start in the Super Heavyweight title match up with Granite City’s Patryk Bartkiewicz. His opponent opened stronger but Henderson never tired and finished the fight with a flurry of blows.
20-year-old flyweight boxer Piotr Gudel broke veteran Olympian Rafal Kaczor’s huge series at the 82nd Polish Men’s Elite National Championships, which was held in the city of Konin, where altogether 83 boxers from each region of Poland entered the competition.

Piotr Gudel of Bialystok had a hard route to the final because he had to fight against a more than strong and experienced opponent, Beijing Olympian and multiple National Champion 29-year-old Rafal Kaczor. Their semifinal contest finished before the final gong when the referee stopped the bout in the final round, putting Gudel through to the gold medal fight.

For Youth Olympic Games champion 19-year-old Artur Bril it was a first taste of major elite competition and he claimed the gold medal in the lightweight class after beating narrowly Uzbekistan’s strong National Champion Fazliddin Gaibnazarov, who eliminated European Championships bronze medalist local Eugen Burhard in the semifinal.

AIBA Youth World Championships bronze medalist 17-year-old Dawid Michelus made his debut at elite level in Konin and claimed the gold medal after beating Mateusz Mazik in the bantamweight class. Michelus is one of the biggest gold medal contenders at this year’s upcoming European Youth Championships.

In the lowest weight class, in the absence of Beijing Olympian Lukasz Maszczyn, Youth National Champion 18-year-old Dawid Jagodzinski of Bydgoszcz won his first national elite title after beating Wojciech Peryt by 4:1.

Veteran Marcin Legowski of Chojnice has been fighting for Poland since 2000 and used his experience to beat narrowly European Championships bronze medalist local Eugen Burhard in the semifinal.

In the light heavyweight division young Kevin Kuenzel secured Germany’s fourth victory in Halle. Kuenzel advanced to the final after beating his compatriot Gottlieb Weiss but had to face AIBA World Championship silver medalist and two-time Asian Games winner Elshod Rasulov of Uzbekistan. Their contest finished 2:2 and Kuenzel won the gold by accepted scores in the biggest surprise of the tournament.

Uzbekistan’s top heavyweight boxer Mirzokhidjion Abdullayev celebrated his 19th birthday only in December but despite his youth he is two-time National Champion in the Central Asian country. Abdullayev advanced to the final where he defeated veteran Alexander Povernov of Germany by 3:1 and celebrated Uzbekistan’s only gold in Halle.

Russia’s World University Champion Arslanbek Mahmudov has not competed in any major tournaments yet but his skills are ideally suited to world-class boxing. The young super heavyweight eliminated European Championships bronze medalist Youssif Abdelghani of Israel and won against the home team’s Erik Pfeiffer by points in the final.

For the first time in the tournament’s history there were also some women’s bouts in the Olympic middleweight division in Halle where Russia’s Irina Poteyeva defeated AIBA Women’s World Championships quarterfinalist and rising power Andrea Strohmaier of Germany by accepted scores in the gold medal contest.

Read the full article on the AIBA website.
JAPANESE NATIONALS STOPPED DUE TO EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI

AIBA President Ching-Kuo Wu expressed his compassion and sympathy for all those in Japan suffering from the effects of the recent traumatic events in the country. On behalf of AIBA, President Wu has offered AIBA's help to the boxing family in Japan.

In a letter to the President of the Japan Amateur Boxing Federation, Mr Akira Yamane, Dr Wu said, “I would like to convey to you my sadness due to the massive earthquake and tsunami which hit your country, causing death and destruction.”

“At this painful time for the Japanese people, I would like to express my compassion and my sympathy to all the suffering families and my condolences to all those who lost a parent or friend in this tragedy.” The 9th Japanese Women’s Elite National Championships had to be stopped and delayed due to the events in Japan.

The event had started in Kanagawa Prefectural Physical Education Center in Fujisawa one day before the national disaster and the preliminaries were held on March 10.

Altogether 44 female boxers entered to the National Championships where the competitors fought in eight weight classes from 48 up to the Olympic 75kg division. The semifinals were to be held on March 12 and the finals on Sunday March 13.

Japan’s best female boxers competed in the Olympic 51kg weight division, they are Asian Games bronze medalist Aya Shinmoto, two-time World Championships competitor Kumiko Ikehara and Ayako Minowa, who has moved down from bantamweight.

In the Olympic lightweight class Japan’s best boxer 19-year-old Tomoko Kugimiya has the biggest chance of winning the national title. She is the defending champion and competed in the Asian Championships and at the Asian Games last year.

Two talented young boxers also have a good chance of taking gold medals, they are Risa Sugimoto in the lowest weight class and Nana Yoshikawa, who is competing in the 57kg weight class.

In addition to the Japanese Women’s Elite National Championships, the 22nd High School Invitational, the 32nd Businessman Championships and the 1st Children Games have also been cancelled due to the recent catastrophic events.

EXCELLENT RESULT FOR BOXING AT UK COMBINED SERVICES SPORTS AWARDS

Ray grew up in Liverpool and had his first taste of boxing aged just nine years old, when his father took him to his local boxing club. By 14 he had his first fight at the ‘Furs & Feathers’ Working Men’s Club in West Derby, Liverpool and later joined a larger club to take up competitive boxing.

He then took up coaching and later officiating and has now been a judge for 17 years and a referee for 15. He is one of England’s few 3-star AIBA referees and was selected to officiate at last year’s Commonwealth Games.

Ray has also just learned that he has won the National Federation (ABAE) Official of the Year award, which he will collect at a dinner in Sheffield on April 8.

The combined services awards are contested between the individual winners of each of the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force Sports Awards and include all sports personnel across the military.

Lt Lucy O’Connor picked up the ‘Sportswoman of the Year’ award. She is one of the UK’s top women boxers and is a four-time ABA Champion at 57kg and won gold at the EU Championships in 2008.

One of the other contenders for the ‘Official of the Year’ award was the Army Boxing Coach, Sgt Tony Davis.

AIBA and WSB referee Ray Morley was presented with the award for the Combined Services ‘Official of the Year 2010/11’ by HRH Princess Royal, Princess Anne at the Combined Services Sports Awards in London on the 15 March.