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Krush.19 took place earlier today at Korakuen Hall in Tokyo, headlined by top Lightweight Yuta Kubo and also featuring the 60kg tournament final and Japanese stars Naoki Ishikawa, Kan Itabashi and Keiji Ozaki.

In the main event, Yuta Kubo moved up to 65kg to take on WKN European Welterweight champ Abdellah Ezbiri, cruising to a unanimous decision on scores of 30-26 and 30-25(x2). Kubo dropped Ezbiri twice in the 2nd round, first with a left hook and again with a spinning back fist, but Ezbiri showed his toughness by gutting it out the entire 3 rounds. Kubo (33-4-1, 15 KO) continues his roll and pushes his win-streak to double digits with his 10th straight win. After the fight, he announced that, with this small jump in weight, he has the intention of moving up to 70kg in the future, which is exciting news for fans of the sport as Kubo has a case for being considered the top Lightweight in the world. At 5'9", Kubo will lose his size advantage that he usually has over his competition, but he will by no means be small for 70kg, so the move makes a lot of sense, especially considering he's entering into his prime with his 25th birthday on the horizon. Ezbiri (27-5-0, 11 KO) has no shame in losing here and could have even helped himself out a bit despite losing, as he showed heart and toughness by picking himself up off the canvas twice and managing to stay on his feet in the 3rd round, where Kubo usually smells blood and finishes off a hurt opponent.

In the co-main event, Naoki Ishikawa cemented his status as the #2 guy in Krush at 60kg, edging out former RISE champion Kan Itabashi on scores of 30-29(x3). Ishikawa (35-18-5, 18 KO) has once again clawed his way towards the top of the division after a 1-4 stretch, going 2-0-1 in his last 3 with wins over Yuji Takeuchi and now Itabashi, and drawing Krush champ Hirotaka Urabe in a title fight. Had Krush not held the 60kg tourney, Ishikawa would be the obvious next opponent for Urabe, as he is 0-1-1 against the champ and currently the only viable option inside Krush at the moment. As it stands, Urabe is defending his title against Fumiya Osawa in July, so Ishikawa will likely have to wait about 6 months. Possible matchups in the mean time are 60kg tournament participants Katsuya Goto, Takashi Nakajima or Yuya, or possible a foreign opponent. Itabashi (19-6-2, 3 KO) came close, but faltered once again against the division's elite. Despite wins over Anuwat, Kanongsuk, Yuki and Keiji Ozaki, Itabashi

has dropped a pair of fights to Masahiro Yamamoto, lost his RISE title to Kosuke Komiyama in a close fight and now lost to Ishikawa. I would like to see RISE take him back in and set him up for a rematch with Komiyama, though I do not think it will fare too well for him as Komiyama has improved with each fight since the two first met.

In the finals of the 60kg tournament, Fumiya Osawa earned the right to challenge current champ Hirotaka Urabe by squeaking by Katsuya Goto via extension round split decision on scores of 10-9(x2) and 9-10. This is a rematch from last December which saw the two fight to a majority draw, so it is pretty obvious that these two are more or less equals. This is huge for Osawa, who was 0-3-1 in his 4 fights previous to entering the tournament, but he has now scored 3 quality wins and is set to face Krush champ Hirotaka Urabe in July. While his chances aren't that good, it's not as if Urabe is unhittable and the 20 year old Osawa was a tough out for Kizaemon Saiga last year and only seems to have gotten better. Goto misses out on his opportunity to fight for the title, but with a close loss here and a close loss to the aforementioned Saiga, Goto is by no means out of the title picture. His head movement and strong boxing give him preferential style matchups against Naoki Ishikawa and Hirotaka Urabe. A good next fight for him would be against Junpei Aotsu.

In a 64kg bout, the exciting Keiji Ozaki returned to action with an easy win over China's Ding Ning on scores of 30-28 and 30-27(x2). After a loss to Thomas Adamandopoulos for the ISKA 62.3kg title and a loss in Russia, Ozaki is 2-0 in 2012, though he was hardly challenged in either fight. Ozaki (25-15-1, 9 KO) is not an elite fighter, but he will always be fun to watch and his flashy taekwondo style, which features a plethora of spinning attacks, presents a difficult challenge for most fighters.

Finally, in the last fight of the 3rd leg of the Krush 63kg WILDRUSH League, Yukimitsu Takahashi picked up his first win of the tournament, earning a unanimous decision over TaCa on scores of 29-28, 30-28 and 30-29. Takahashi had been involved in two exciting fights before this one, but only managed to get a draw and a single point from each fight. This is a big win over one of the top fighters in this round robin and puts him at 3rd place with 4 points and in striking distance of league leader Hideaki Yamazaki. However, Takahashi has his two hardest matchups for his final two bouts, against #1 Yamazaki and #2 Hitoshi Tsukagoshi and being more of a decision fighter, the odds are stacked against him. TaCa sits at 1-2-0 (1 KO) in the tournament and gets jumped by Takahashi in the standings. To win the league, he would likely have to score back to back knockouts.

After 3 fights, the current standings of the WILDRUSH League are

1. Hideaki Yamazaki, 6 points (3-0-0, 0 KO)

2. Hitoshi Tsukagoshi, 5 points (2-1-0, 1 KO)

3. Yukimitsu Takahashi, 4 points (1-0-2, 0 KO)

4. TaCa, 3 points (1-2-0, 1 KO)

5. Naoki Terasaki, 1 point (0-2-1, 0 KO)

5. NOMAN, 1 point (0-2-1, 0 KO)

Quick results after the break

65kg Fight: Yuta Kubo def. Abdellah Ezbiri by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (30-26, 30-25, 30-25)

60kg Fight: Naoki Ishikawa def. Kan Itabashi by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (30-29, 30-29, 30-29)

64kg Fight: Keiji Ozaki def. Ding Ning by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (30-28, 30-27, 30-27)

60kg Tournament Final: Fumiya Osawa def. Katsuya Goto by ext. round Split Decision (10-9, 10-9, 9-10) after a 3rd round Majority Draw (30-28, 30-30, 30-30)

63kg WILDRUSH League Fight: Yukimitsu Takahashi def. TaCa by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (29-28, 30-28, 30-29)

70kg Fight: Yoichi Yamazaki def. Masakatsu Watanabe by 3rd round KO (right cross) at 1:00

60kg Fight: Junpei Aotsu def. Yuta Otaki by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (30-28, 30-29, 30-28)

60kg Fight: Shota Kanbe def. Yuzo Suzuki by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (30-29, 30-29, 30-29)

55kg Fight: Yuki Kyotani def. Takeru by 1st round TKO (doctor stoppage) at 3:00

63kg Fight: Atsushi Ogata def. Daizo Sasaki by 3rd round Majority Decision (30-28, 28-28, 28-28)

70kg Fight: Masaur □D□HIRO Matsumura def. Masato Uchiyama by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (29-26, 29-26, 28-26)

65kg Fight: Keisuke Kurihara def. Yasuhiro Motomura by 3rd round Unanimous Decision (29-28, 30-28, 30-28)