

Joshua beats Helenius with seventh round knockout



● REUTERS

Former heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua beat Finnish stand-in Robert Helenius with a seventh round single-punch knockout to keep himself on track for a lucrative payday against American Deontay Wilder next year.

Helenius, stepping in after Britain's Dillian Whyte was ruled out of the non-title fight by a dope test a week ago, lasted longer than expected but crashed to the canvas one minute and 27 seconds into the round, according to BBC.

Some of the crowd at London's O2, who had grown restless with some booing already in the third round, were heading for the exit by then as Joshua failed to deliver immediate fireworks.

The big Briton looked nervous and stiff at the start and strangely tentative when Helenius, who fought in Finland only a week ago, appeared to be out on his legs and ready for the taking.

Joshua climbed straight out of the ring without saying a word after referee Victor Loughlin stopped the contest.

Helenius meanwhile received medical attention and some oxygen before getting back on his feet.

"I knew this would happen, everyone's talking about the new AJ and the old AJ and after two or three rounds the crowd starts to get a little bit impatient," Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn told the BBC.

"He finds the measure of his right hand and he delivers one of the knockouts of the year on Robert Helenius... this is just the AJ you're going to see now. "He's still got to be more aggressive than we saw tonight but there's a lot on the line."

The knockout was the 23rd of Joshua's career, taking his record to 26 wins and three defeats, but his first since December 2020 when he beat Bulgarian Kubrat Pulev in a WBA, IBO, IBF and WBO title defence in London.

Joshua lost those belts to Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk in September 2021.

There has been talk of Joshua fighting Wilder, the former WBC champion, next year but the Briton needs to keep winning to be talked about in the same breath as the American and reigning champion Tyson Fury.

"It's hard for him to get up for fights like this," said Hearn. "The Wilder fights, the Fury fights, that's what he wants."

Two bronzes for Iranian women in 2023 IDBF World Dragon Boat Racing C'ships



Sports Desk

The Iranian U-24 women's dragon boat received bronze medals in 500- and 200-meter rowing at the 16th edition of IDBF World Dragon Boat Racing Championships underway in Pattaya, Thailand. Iran's team comprising 10 paddlers faced Thailand, Hong Kong, and China in the 500- and 200-meter distance finals and stood at third place with a time of 2:22.271 for 500-meter and 57.088 for 200-meter competitions, according to iri.crsf. Thailand and China stood in first and second place respectively in the sporting event. The 16th IDBF World Dragon Boat Racing Championships was held in Pattaya, Thailand during August 8 to 13, 2023. Dragon boat racing is a watersport wherein a number of watercraft called dragon boats race over a clearly defined unobstructed course in the shortest time possible. Paddlers sit in twos side-by-side and use a single-bladed paddle. Two categories compete in this discipline, 10-seater (small boat) and 20-seater (standard) referring to the number of paddlers in the boat. A team also has a drummer and a steerer, with everybody in the boat paddling to the rhythm of the drum.

Iranian table tennis players bag two golds in Tunisia



● MEHR

Iranian table tennis players Benyamin Faraji and Amir-Mehdi Keshavarzi each claimed gold medals at the 2023 WTT (World Table Tennis) Youth Contender Tunis late on Saturday. Faraji defeated Wassim Essid from Tunisia 3-0 in the

final match of the U-15 Boys Singles, reported Mehr News Agency. He had defeated Algeria player 3-1 and English rival 3-2 en route to the final match. Also, Keshavarzi grabbed the gold medal by defeating his

Slovakian opponent 3-1 in the final match of the U-19 Boys Single. He beat his rivals from Germany and Egypt to reach the final match. The competition is being held in Tunis, Tunisia.

Sinner beats Paul to set up Canadian Open final clash with De Minaur

Italian seventh seed Jannik Sinner beat Tommy Paul 6-4 6-4 to set up a Canadian Open final clash with Australia's Alex De Minaur, who was a 6-1 6-3 winner over Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina. Sinner outlasted Paul in a slugfest that was a showcase of power from both sides and at one point saw the duo engage in a 46-shot rally that marked the longest of the week in Toronto, Reuters reported. "It was a fight obviously," said Sinner, who saved eight of 11 break points in the win. "He was playing great as I do and at the end, you know match point, when I got there I was praying please. But thank God I won in two (sets)." Sinner and Paul twice exchanged breaks in the opening set but it was the Italian who held serve when it mattered most as he took a 5-4 lead before clinching the set with another break. Sinner led 2-1 in the second

set when Paul called for the tour physio who worked on his right hip while he lay sprawled on his left side in discomfort. Paul was unable to hold serve in the next game, handing over the break with a double fault, before a determined Sinner went on to consolidate for a commanding 4-1 lead. From there, the Italian continued to display great length and pace on his ground strokes and turned aside three break points, including one during a 46-shot rally, for a 5-2 lead that sent him on his way. "I tried so hard to win that point," Sinner said. "Just tried to play one more ball in the court than him and that was I guess the solution." De Minaur overcame blustery conditions to secure a breakthrough victory over Davidovich Fokina and reach the first Masters 1000 final of his career. De Minaur, who was fresh off an upset over second

seed Daniil Medvedev, delivered a simple gameplan in rather tricky conditions, while Davidovich Fokina struggled to find any sort of rhythm throughout the 78-minute match. "First thing I knew once I stepped out on court it wasn't going to be pretty, so I didn't expect perfect tennis from my side of the court today," said De Minaur, who wrote "so windy" on an on-court camera lens after the match. "I just told myself to stay positive, keep competing no matter what and you never know what's going to happen. "So I thought I had a great mindset today... Didn't play the best of tennis, but I did

what needed to be done today in these conditions." De Minaur wasted no time setting the tone against Davidovich Fokina as he broke the Spaniard twice en route to a 5-1 lead before serving out the opening set on his first opportunity. The 24-year-old Australian maintained the pressure as he broke Davidovich Fokina four times to build a 5-2 lead in the second before sealing the match with his seventh break. "I've had a hell of a week. It's been the breakthrough that I always knew I had inside of me so it's great to show it and play for a final," De Minaur said.



● REUTERS