## **World Cup Highlights**

Five of the best teams in the World got together in the Baltimore Civic Arena for some great wrestling! World Cup matches are fun to watch because of the team dual meet format. The competition format is much like the NWCA National Duals at the college level and the State Duals at the high school level. The dual meet format ads a unique dimension to the elite level of competition. The Team Scoring procedure needs to be made more fan friendly, but I am not going to tackle that topic.

The World Cup consisted of four sessions contested over two days. The second session featured the U.S.A. vs. Iran. This proved to be the most exciting dual meet of the weekend. Both teams featured strong line-ups and every match was very intense! There were many Iranian fans in attendance so the arena was rocking.

The U.S.A. fans were more of a subdued group at first, especially after Golam Reza Mohammadi shut out Teague Moore 3-0 at 119 pounds. Under international team scoring rules, a loss by shut out is worse for the loser than losing a decision. This shutout was particularly disheartening for Team U.S.A.

In the next match at 128 pounds, Kerry Boumans livened up the crowd with a close decision that came down to the final 30 seconds. At end of the match Boumans ran around the mat pumping his fists to the crowd with patriotic exuberance and the crowd responded positively.

Boumans' win set the stage for the most highly anticipated match of the weekend. Iran's Olympic Gold Medalist, Ali Reza Dabir, was set to face off with America's Olympian, Cary Kolat. Dabir defeated Brands in the 2000 Olympic Games on his way to Olympic Gold at 128 pounds. He was now moved up to challenge Kolat for World Supremacy at 139 pounds. The World Cup Program included a 3-page spread on this match-up. It included a photo with half of Dabir's face and half of Kolat's face side-by-side. It had their respective country's flags in the background. It was a neat promotional photo and they have an uncanny resemblance.

Dabir and Kolat wrestled an exciting, hard fought match. Dabir came away with a 4-3 victory on the strength of a takedown, gut wrench, and par terre counter. I will tackle more specifics of this match in my regular technique and training article.

At 153 pounds Chris Bono fell 2-1 in overtime to Mehdi Baraati. That put the U.S.A. down 3 matches to 1. The Iranian fans were pumped. The U.S.A. would need 4 consecutive wins to defeat Iran or a pin somewhere along the way to compensate for the shutout loss at 119 pounds.

At 168 pound Joe Williams relied on his explosive double leg to defeat Mehdi Akbarnejad 4-2. This match was not without excitement. The Iranian paused on his feet near the edge of the mat to question the scoring while action was still taking place. Williams exploded on a double leg and drove Akbarnejad off the platform. It was much like Brandon Slay drove Williams off the stage at 2000 National Open, except the Iranian had clearly (stupidly) let up to try to talk to the official. When Williams tanked him, they went flying off the platform and the benches cleared. (Picture a baseball hit batter. The benches were mat side and the Iranian contingent was ticked off. Unlike in baseball where they casually jog from the bench and then usually just stand around and watch). Fortunately, the situation dissipated quickly and cool heads prevailed. No points were awarded nor were any penalty points given.

At 184 pounds Charles Burton kept the U.S hopes alive by decisioning Ahmad Ahekofteh, 3-2. At 213 pounds, 1998 World Champion, Ali Reza Heidari, defeated Dominic Black (USA), 4-1. The Iranians led 4 matches to 3, heading into the heavyweight battle. A win by Kerry McCoy would not be enough. Kerry needed a pin for the U.S. to win. It reminded me of some of World Cups I was in when it all came down to Bruce Baumgartner needing a win or pin to defeat the Russians.

Iran's Ebrahim Mehraban is soft looking compared to the chiseled Kerry McCoy. Mehraban had his roller skates on and was doing his best to keep the match from getting wild. He looked like he was

going to hold his own for a while, as McCoy patiently stalked him for over a minute. The U.S. crowd was worried until about half way through the match. McCoy locked up an ankle lace, converted it into an arm turk, and then worked the Iranian to his back. There were a couple instances when Mehraban looked like he was going to get off his back or out of bounds. Kerry circled him away from the edge, tightened his hold and finished the job. FALL. The crowd went wild! It was a very exciting moment!! U.S.A. 16, Iran 15. It was definitely the highlight of the weekend for the United States. McCoy's exciting victory ultimately secured both the team gold for the U.S.A. and the World Cup individual gold for Kerry McCoy.

The Iranians defeated the Russians 21-10 in session #3, while the U.S.A. beat Turkey 22-10. In the final session the U.S. pounded the Russians 21-9 to wrap up an exciting weekend of wrestling. En route to defeating the Russians, Kerry Boumans, Joe Williams, and Kerry McCoy secured individual World Cup Gold Medals.

Hopefully, New York native and Penn State graduate, Kerry McCoy, and many other U.S. stars, will have the opportunity to live their dreams at the World Championships in New York City September 26-29. I look forward to seeing the events as they unravel. The World Championships in America are often a once in a decade opportunity. I encourage every wrestling fan to make plans to attend the World Championships. Bring your team, family and friends. It may be a once in a lifetime experience!

Box scores from some of the dual meets I have described above are listed below. You can also see my regular feature Technique & Training Tips Article for more World Cup information.

## USA 16 Iran 15

- 54 kg Golam Reza Mohammadi (IRAN) dec. Teague Moore (USA), 3-0
- 58 kg Kerry Boumans (USA) dec. Masoud Mostafa Gokar (IRAN), 5-2
- 63 kg Ali Reza Dabir (IRAN) dec. Cary Kolat (USA), 4-3
- 69 kg Mehdi Baraati (IRAN) dec. Chris Bono (USA), 2-1 OT
- 76 kg Joe Williams (USA) dec. Mehdi Akbarnejad (IRAN), 4-2
- 85 kg Charles Burton (USA) dec. Ahmad Ahekofteh (IRAN), 3-2
- 97 kg Ali Reza Heidari (IRAN) dec. Dominic Black (USA), 4-1
- 130 kg Kerry McCoy (USA) fall Ebrahim Mehraban (IRAN), 2:31
- USA 21 Russia 9
- 54 kg Alexandre Kontoev (RUS) fall Teague Moore (USA), 2:15
- 58 kg Kerry Boumans (USA) dec. Murat Ramazanov (RUS), 3-0
- 63 kg Cary Kolat (USA) dec. Miron Dzadzaev (RUS), 10-2
- 69 kg Chris Bono (USA) inj. def. Iskhak Boziev (RUS)
- 76 kg Joe Williams (USA) dec. Ruslan Kokaev (RUS), 6-0

- 85 kg Charles Burton (USA) dec. Khadjimourat Gatsalov (RUS), 3-2
- 97 kg Taimouraz Tiguiev (RUS) dec. Dominic Black (USA), 5-3
- 130 kg Kerry McCoy (USA) disqualification Nikolai Telegin (RUS)
- Iran 21 Russia 10
- 54 kg Golam Reza Mohammadi (IRAN) dec. Alexandre Kontoev (RUS), 3-0
- 58 kg Masoud Mostafa Gokar (IRAN) dec. Murat Ramazanov (RUS), 6-5
- 63 kg Ali Reza Dabir (IRAN) fall Miron Dzadzaev (RUS), 5:38
- 69 kg Iskhak Boziev (RUS) dec. Mehdi Baraati (IRAN), 6-2
- 76 kg Mehdi Akbarnejad (IRAN) dec. Inal Dzagourov (RUS), 11-3
- 85 kg Khadjimourat Magomedov (RUS) dec. Ahmad Ahekofteh (IRAN), 2-1
- 97 kg Ali Reza Heidari (IRAN) dec. Taimouraz Tiguiev (RUS), 3-1
- 130 kg Ebrahim Mehraban (IRAN) dec. Nikolai Telegin (RUS), 4-1
- USA 22 Turkey 10
- 54 kg Stephen Abas (USA) fall Vedat Oztemur (TUR), 2:08
- 58 kg Kerry Boumans (USA) dec. Arif Kama (TUR), 6-1
- 63 kg Cary Kolat (USA) fall Omer Cubukci (TUR), 3:38
- 69 kg Ahmet Gulhan (TUR) dec. Chris Bono (USA), 4-3
- 76 kg Joe Williams (USA) dec. Gokhan Yavaser (TUR), 4-3
- 85 kg Nuri Zengin (TUR) dec. Charles Burton (USA), 7-4
- 97 kg Dominic Black (USA) dec. Vedat Ergin (TUR), 7-1
- 130 kg Kerry McCoy (USA) dec. Aydın Polatci (TUR), 8-5