Midalja Tal-Fidda Għal Nicholas Muscat Tikkonkludi Kampanja Storika Għal Malta fil-European Youth Championships

Nicholas Muscat rebaħ it-tielet midalja tiegħu dil-ġimgħa fil-European Youth Championships ta' 2022 wara li rebaħ midalja tal-fidda fil-kategorija tal-Masters.

Wara li kien għadu kif rebaħ żewġ midalji tal-bronż (wieħed mat-tim tas-subien u ieħor fil-kategorija tal-"All Events"), iż-żagħżugħ Malti ta' 17-il sena Nicholas Muscat rebaħ midalja tal-fidda fil-kategorija tal-Masters għas-subien. B'hekk, huwa sar l-ewwel Malti biex qatt laħaq il-finali tal-EYC Masters. Muscat spiċċa fit-tieni post wara li tilef il-finali kontra l-aqwa bowler mill-EYC: ir-rebbieħ tal-EYC Masters, Singles, u tal-“All Events” - Robin Ilhammar mill-Isvezja.

Il-kategorija tal-Masters ikkonsista mill-aqwa 24 atleta fil-kampjonati skont il-logħob kollu li ntlagħbu fit-tliet kategoriji prinċipali - Singles, Doubles u tat-Tim. Dawn l-aqwa 24 imbagħad iddaħħlu f'turnament tan-knockout ibbażata fuq is-seeding ta' kull plejer. Kull laqgħa diretta bejn żewġ atleti kienet ibbażata fuq tliet logħbiet, i.e., l-ewwel wieħed biex jirbaħ żewġ logħbiet jgħaddi. Il-Masters huwa meqjus bħala l-iktar kategorija prestiġjuża peress li tikkonsisti biss l-aqwa bowlers mill-Ewropa kollha.

Fost 26 federazzjonijiet nazzjonali u 93 mill-aqwa bowlers fl-Ewropa, 3/4 subien Maltin ikkwalifikaw għal din il-kategorija: Kayden Laganà (fit-23 post), Dwayne Zahra (fit-22 post), u Nicholas Muscat (fit-tielet post). Laganà u Zahra ġew eliminati fit-tieni rawnd minn ħamsa waqt li Muscat baqa’ għaddej sal-finali. Laganà ġie eliminat wara tlett logħbiet kontra r-rebbieħ eventwali - Robin Ilhammar mill-Isvezja, waqt li Zahra ġie eliminat f'żewġ logħbiet kontra t-tieni seed - ir-rebbieħ tal-midalja tal-bronż eventwali - Robin Noberg ukoll mill-Isvezja.

Wara li kellu BYE fl-ewwel rawnd ħabba s-seeding għoli tiegħu, Nicholas Muscat rebaħ lil Ondřej Prekop mir-Repubblika Ċeka (il-21 seed), is-seba' seed mill-Italja – Mario Del Gaudio, u Robin Noberg - it-tieni seed mill-Isvezja, biex għadda sal-finali. Hemmhekk, Muscat sfortunatament tilef f'żewġ logħbiet kontra l-aqwa plejer f'dawn il-kampjonati tal-EYC.

Muscat lagħab b'punteġġ medju ta' 205.5 fl-għaxar logħbiet li lagħab fil-Masters fir-rotta tiegħu bħala l-ewwel żagħżugħ Malti biex jirbaħ midalja individwali f'dawn il-kampjonati. Wara dil-ġimgħa, Muscat sar it-tieni individwu Malti li qatt rebaħ midalja individwali fl-istorja tal-EYC. Iż-żagħżugħa Sara Xuereb kienet l-ewwel persuna Maltija biex tikseb din il-kisba. B'dan ir-riżultat, Nicholas Muscat ikkonferma ruħu bħala wieħed mill-aqwa prospetti tal-bowling fl-Ewropa. F’dawn il-kampjonati, b’tliet midalji minn ħames kategoriji, il-membri tal-Malta Bowling Association urew li huma lesti jikkompetu fost l-aqwa federazzjonijiet tal-bowling fl-Ewropa.

Silver in Masters Concludes Historic Run for Nicholas Muscat at European Youth Championships

Nicholas Muscat wins a historic third medal during the European Youth Championships 2022 after earning a silver medal in the Boys' Masters Event – arguably the most prestigious championships in the sport of bowling for European youths.

Shortly after winning two bronze medals individually (All Events) and alongside his national teammates (Team Event) this week, young bowling sensation Nicholas Muscat made history as he became the first Maltese to ever make the final of the European Youth Championships (EYC) Masters Event. Muscat finished as the runner-up after losing the final in straight games to EYC 2022's Masters champion: Sweden's Robin Ilhammar.

The Masters Event consisted of the top 24 bowlers from the entire EYC (based on their play in all 3 major categories – Singles, Doubles, and Team) being put in a best-of-3-games elimination bracket. The Masters is therefore considered as the most prestigious event to many since it features the top bowlers from all across Europe.

Featuring 26 national federations and 93 of Europe's top male youth bowlers, 3/4 Maltese boys qualified into the top 24: Kayden Laganà (23rd seed), Dwayne Zahra (22nd seed), and Nicholas Muscat (3rd seed). Laganà and Zahra were both eliminated in the second of five knockout rounds (Step 2) while Muscat kept climbing the ladder. Laganà was eliminated by the top seed and eventual champion – Sweden's Robin Ilhammar – after three games, while Zahra was knocked out by the second seed – Sweden's Robin Noberg – after two games.

After facing a BYE in Step 1 due to his high seeding, 17-year-old Nicholas Muscat then beat Czech Republic's Ondřej Prekop (21st seed) in Step 2, Italy's Mario Del Gaudio (7th seed) in the Quarter Finals – Step 3, and Sweden's Robin Noberg (2nd seed) in the Semi-finals – Step 4, before losing to the top seed – Sweden's Robin Ilhammar – in the battle for gold. This victory gave Ilhammar his fifth medal of this year's EYC (2 silver plus 3 gold) as he dominated in all five categories.

Muscat averaged 205.5 across these 10 games of one-on-ones to become the first Maltese male to win an individual medal in EYC history. He is the second Maltese to win an individual medal in the championships' history, since Sara Xuereb is a recent 3-time medallist from the female category. His historic run in this year's championships saw him become the first Maltese to ever win three medals within the same edition of the EYC, averaging 215.50 per game throughout. With 3 total medals plus Muscat's performance as one of Europe's best bowling prospects during these championships, Maltese bowling has been pinned as a competitive threat in all international competitions.