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Swiss wrestling news

Switzerland has a new Schwingerkönig (King of Wrestling)



Matthias Sempach, new Swiss Schwinger-Koenig with his Prize: Bull "Fors vo der Lueg"

You might recall that in January this year, three Schwinger from the Canton of Berne came to New Zealand to train with Valerie Adams under their coach Jean-Pierre Egger to prepare themselves for the Federal Wrestling Contest (Eidgenössisches Schwing- und Älplerfest ESAF).

They included the two brothers Matthias and Stefan Sempach and Matthias Siegenthaler. The three blokes also took part in the Taranaki Schwingfest. They enjoyed the stay in Auckland and Taranaki very much.

Pia and I had the pleasure to have them at our house twice, as we had several connections: Pia's mother Ursula yodels with Elisabeth Sempach (the mother of the two Schwinger brothers); and the Nanny we had at the time knew them too, through yodelling together in the children's group.

We were very keen to check the progress of the ESAF as it was held in Burgdorf, hometown of our Society Riflemaster Ernst Lanz and halfway between Fraubrunnen and Ruegsauschachen, where Pia and I grew up (so we had to go through Burgdorf to see each other!).

We were very pleased to see that Swiss State Television (SRF2) had a live stream showing the whole contest live. Friday saw the official opening of

the event and then Schwingen started on Saturday. The Bernese section showed some very strong candidates for the title, and it became clear early on Sunday morning that it might come to the showdown between Matthias Sempach and another Bernese bloke, Christian Stucki (from Lyss).

After seven rounds, Matthias (with only wins) was through to the final, whereas Christian Stucki had to go to an 8th round to make sure that if he won the final he could be the king. Apparently the last time, the winner was already decided before the final round.

Pia and I went to bed at 10.30pm NZ time but set the alarm for 2.30am to watch the final should Mätü (Matthias) be in there. And sure enough, the two finalists were Matthias Sempach and Christian Stucki. After 12 minutes, our Mätü won against Chrigu (Christian). He is now the new Schwingerkönig for the next three years, until the next ESAF takes place in Estavayer-le-Lac.

The Swiss Society and the Auckland Swiss Club congratulate Matthias Sempach on this great win and we are sure that the great atmosphere in New Zealand helped him along.

Matthias Siegenthaler, who had also been training here in New Zealand, finished in 4th place, while Stefan Sempach had an injury early in the season and couldn't compete. By the way, the Emmental Arena, a purpose built temporary stadium, seated 52'013 people and it was sold out.

By Adrian Blaser



Matthias Sempach, Matthias Siegenthaler and Stefan Sempach visiting with the Blaser family in Auckland, lifting the proud boys Cedric and Tobi