

## It's Showtime Japan/REBELS.9 Results: Masahiro Yamamoto Earns It's Showtime 61kg Title Shot

Written by Sam Sattler

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Earlier today at Differ Ariake, It's Showtime Japan and REBELS copromoted their second event together, It's Showtime Japan 4 and REBELS.9, headlined by an It's Showtime 61kg MAX #1 contender's bout.

In the main event, former AJKF Featherweight champion and 2009 Krush Lightweight GP winner Masahiro Yamamoto defeated former RISE 60kg champion Kan Itabashi for a second time on the strength of a 3rd round flying knee knockdown by unanimous decision on scores of 30-27(x3), 30-28 and 29-28. The win puts Yamamoto back on a 2-fight win streak and makes him the #1 contender for the It's Showtime 61kg championship, currently held by Javier Hernandez. The last time the two met Yamamoto was on a 5 fight win streak, including his Krush tournament win, winning 10 of his last 11 fights while Itabashi was riding an 8 fight win streak including back to back title defenses of his RISE belt over TURBΦ and Keiji Ozaki. Yamamoto won that fight by unanimous decision, but went on a 4-fight winless streak immediately after before defeating Arita Tsukahara to earn the right to face Itabashi. Itabashi won his place in this fight by defeating Genki Yamamoto at the first It's Showtime Japan event in what turned out to be Genki's last fight. This win restores a lot of momentum for the 28 year old Masahiro Yamamoto that had been lost over the past year and a half. His matchup with Hernandez should be an extremely entertaining fight. Hernandez is set to take on former 61kg champion Sergio Wielzen, who defeated Yamamoto, in a non-title fight in Spain at It's Showtime 53 on November 12th.

In the co-main event, Hinata was able to defeat South Korean fighter Baek Min-Cheol via a body kick KO at 1:01 into the first round. For Hinata, it is a bounce back from his one-sided loss

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to 70kg kingpin Giorgio Petrosyan as well as a tune up for his fight at the big It's Showtime January 28th show against Gago Drago.

WPMF Japan Welteweight champion Daiki Watabe picked up a much needed win with a unanimous decision over former J-Network Super Lightweight champion Tomo Kiire on scores of 29-27(x2), 29-28 and 29-26(x2). Watabe was riding a two fight losing streak with a loss to Chi Bin Lim in RISE as well as a loss to T-98 at the first It's Showtime Japan event. Up next for Watabe could be a defense of his WPMF title against newly crowned J-Network Welterweight champ Masato Otake who is looking to be one of the hottest prospects in Japan at the moment.

In REBELS action, WPMF Japan Featherweight champion Yosuke Morii picked up a 3rd round KO win over a Lumpinee ranker. If Morii continues winning and Genji Umeno wins his next fight for the WPMF World title, the two could meet each other with the WPMF Japan and World titles on the line as well as a spot in the Lumpinee Stadium feathweight rankings. {jcomments on}