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## Kim Wins Surprise Judo Silver

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Kim Jae-bum has always been considered a second best, a notch below top stars like Wang Ki-chun or Lee Won-hee in the South Korean judo royalty.

The 23-year-old found himself a runner-up again Tuesday, but after bagging an unexpected silver in the men's 81-kilogram competition at the Beijing Olympics, his days as an afterthought seem effectively over.

After huffing and puffing his way to the final, never getting an easy match on the way, a tired Kim lost to Germany's Ole Bischof, the former European champion, after conceding a yuko score on a foot sweep.

However, nobody expected Kim to get that far just 10 months after moving up in weight from the 73-kilogram class.



South Korea's Kim Jae-bum reacts after losing to Germany's Ole Bischof in the men's 81-kilogram judo competition at the Beijing Olympics, Tuesday. / Yonhap

``He clearly didn't have any gas left in the tank for the final," said Cho Yong-cheol, vice president of the Korea Judo Association.

``Kim needed to shake his opponent with speed, but he wasn't able to do that in the end," he said.

Kim has always been considered a top-tier judo prospect, but didn't get many chances to shine on the international stage. He lost the chance to represent his country in the 2006 Asian Games in Doha after losing to Lee in the national trials and watched his compatriot win the gold from his living room.

Kim planned on redemption in Beijing, but it was Wang this time who defeated him in the national trials for the 73-kilogram class.

The decision to change weight classes was a gamble by Kim, who was desperate for an Olympic chance and concerned that his window of opportunity was closing. However, Tuesday's silver made him look smart.

Kim has always been criticized by coaches for his lack of ippons, and his poor finishing ability may have cost him the gold in the tournament.

Aside from beating Poland's Robert Krawczyk by ippon in his third match, all of Kim's matches lasted five minutes or more, including an overtime win against Guillaume Elmont of the Netherlands in the semifinals.

Kim seemed to lack his earlier resilience against Bischof, failing to put up a convincing challenge after giving up the yuko score.

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