

# Bird's incredible comeback seals World title

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England's Betty Bird joined [Geof Bax](#) in being crowned a new World Veteran's Champion when she won the 75-79 year old women's singles in Stockholm.

It wasn't all plain sailing though as she had to stage an incredible fightback in the fourth game of the final against Japan's Akemi Hayashi to keep her hopes alive.

Bird was 2-1 down and 8-2 down when her Austrian coach, Lorraine Baker called a time-out. It didn't appear to have helped as Bird soon found herself 10-2 down against her Japanese opponent.

However, Bird fought back to 10-10, saving eight consecutive match points, before saving a ninth at 10-11 to eventually take the game 13-11 and level the match 2-2.



Hayashi on her ninth match point at 11-10 up

At that point her face was one of surprise. She could not believe it. Lorraine Baker could not believe it. All the people in the stand could not believe it.

When Bird, 78, closed point by point, Hayashi tried to change her game.

She changed from regular attacking to pushing and attacked more seldom. She played carefully, waited for a chance, and some chances came but Bird showed an impressive defence and astonishingly sealed the game.

The deciding fifth game was somewhat of an anti-climax as Bird took it 11-8 but the fourth game had more than enough drama for both players.

Bird said of her victory: "This was my first final in the World Veterans, and I am so happy. I was not seeded but I beat number three, number two and also number one seeded player."

She added: "Look, I am 78, Hayashi is just 75."

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