

## **YOG Nanjing 2014: Golden splash for Yang Hao in men's 3m springboard**

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The next generation of world-class springboard divers delivered nice performances tonight in the men's 3m springboard final on Day 2 of the Youth Olympic diving programme at Nanjing's Olympic Sports Centre Natatorium. The event brought its lot of suspense as three divers representing Canada, Germany and Ukraine were vying for third spot. China's Yang Hao dominated the operations to top the event with a grueling 613.80 while Mexico's Rodrigo Lopez excelled to bag silver, scoring a remarkable 593.65. Canadian Philippe Gagne presented the most difficult programme and his risks paid off as he happily received the bronze around his neck with a final score of 566.75.

Yang Hao, who earned lower scores (ranging from 6.5 to 8) for his second and fourth dives, a Forward 3.5 Somersault and Reverse 2.5 Somersault, Piked, said he usually struggled with them in practice.

Whereas the top-5 divers behind Yang all presented at least one dive of a 3.4 degree of difficulty (DD), the Chinese prospect's highest DD was of 3.1.

Asked about his 'low' DD, Yang said: "My main event is men's 10m platform so I didn't plan to take risks in this event."

Runner-up Rodrigo Lopez said on his performance: "I was feeling really good during the final but did not perform as I hoped. I lost a few points because of my entries but in the end, the result was very good."

Lopez' last dive, a Forward 2.5 Somersault 2 Twists, Piked received the final's highest score, 86.70.

"To beat China, especially at home, is very hard but we always try to challenge them," Lopez added.

"The YOG is an amazing competition, it helps more than anything else prepare for the big meet, the Olympics. It's a stepping stone."

Ranked fifth ahead of the final, Canada's Philippe Gagne withstood the pressure from main podium contenders German Timo Barthel and Ukrainian Pypyl Tkachenko to secure the bronze.

"I'm so happy I was able to make the podium. I wasn't really confident during the final, especially regarding my two final dives, which are the most difficult for me. In the end, these were the two that worked the best for me," said Gagne.

For his Reverse 3.5 Somersault, Tucked (3.5 DD), Gagne scored a low 42.00 in the preliminaries against 78.75 in tonight's final. Buoyed by the result, Gagne gave it all in his last dive, a Reverse 1.5 Somersault 3.5 Twists, Free (3.5 DD), earning his highest score (80.50).

On the duel for the bronze, Gagne added: "I tried not to think about it, otherwise I would have felt too much

pressure. I focused on my dives and tried to apply the corrections my coach told me about after the prelims and it worked."

On the Youth Olympics, Gagne concluded: "I love the YOG experience, the volunteers are so many and say 'hello' to everyone, I also love this city!"



The men's 3m springboard podium in Nanjing - *credit: Xinhua/Yan Yan*

Ranked third heading to the final, Timo Barthel had to settle for an agonising fourth place with 548.40 points. The Dresden-based diver bungled his third dive, a Forward 2.5 Somersault 2 Twists, Piked, to end up empty-handed in the final round.

Post-event, Barthel said: "I was motivated going into the final but today was not my day. I was sick for the last three weeks so I did well today given my shape. I still wish I could have gotten a medal."

Only 2.75 points separated Barthel from fifth-placed Ukrainian Pylyp Tkachenko (545.65). U.S. Dashiell Enos (from Studio City, Calif.) was sixth with 535.75.

Daniel Jensen of Norway placed seventh overall with 532.40 points. Yury Naurozau of Belarus placed eighth with 527.20, besting Swiss Guillaume Dutoit, fourth after the morning preliminaries, by two points (525.05).

Colombian Kevin Garcia Alvarez scored 460.40 for tenth place while Italian Giacomo Ciammarughi and France's Alexis Jandard took 11th and 12th with respective final scores of 448.20 and 439.10.



Silver medallist Rodrigo Lopez of Mexico - *credit: Xinhua/Yan Yan*

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