

## Beijing 2014, Day 1: Host China bags two gold

Zhou Xin, FINA Media Committee Member

Host China swept the gold in the free team and synchro highlight routine on the opening day of the 9th FINA Synchronised Swimming World Trophy, organised in Beijing, China on December 13-14, 2014. Delighting the home crowd, the Chinese team performed brilliantly on "Heroines" to finish first in the free team routine, collecting a total 95.1665 points. Swimming to "Into the Wind", Russia's squad took with 91.8335 while Canada claimed third spot, earning 89.6665 points. Mexico and Spain came fourth and fifth, scoring 88.6665 and 86.6665, respectively.

"We see the World Trophy like a big party on the elite synchro swimming stage. We enjoy it and like it very much!" said Ma Shuang, who competed in the 2011 edition. "We did not feel as nervous as competing in other big world event, but more excited and passionate. We performed very well today," she added.

China's "Under the Dream Sky"-themed routine for the synchro highlight routine earned the highest score, 95.8335, beating Canada (second, 92.1670) and Russia (third, 92.000). Mexico and Spain again placed fourth and fifth, respectively, in this event.



Team Spain - *photo credit: Wang Xin*

Maximova Maria, Russia's coach, said: "We have a mixed team here, with most swimmers coming from the junior team. We are trying to do our bests to enter the national team next year. It is a good start for us to compete in the World Trophy and show ourselves to the world."

Apart from the professional FINA technical judges, the competition features also "celebrity judges", including local singers, talk hosts and former athletes. 2014 Olympic speed skating champion Li Jianrou said she soon fell in love with the sport. "I thought I could not understand synchronised swimming since my favourite is speed skating. But when I saw their performance, I was touched," Li said.

---