

High Diving Day 2: Iffland wins first title for Australia

Pedro Adrega, FINA Communications Department

After two consecutive wins from US athletes, Rhiannan Iffland, from Australia, became the 2017 high diving world champion, following a spectacular performance today in Budapest (HUN). Second after the first round on Friday, the Australian diver was rewarded for her consistency throughout the three last rounds of dives. Totalling 320.70 points – she never had scores under 8.0 today -, she was better than Adriana Jimenez (MEX), silver medallist in 308.90, and Yana Nestsiarava (BLR), third in 303.95. These three athletes were the only ones accumulating more than 300 points after the four combined dives.



The medallists in Budapest - Photo by Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

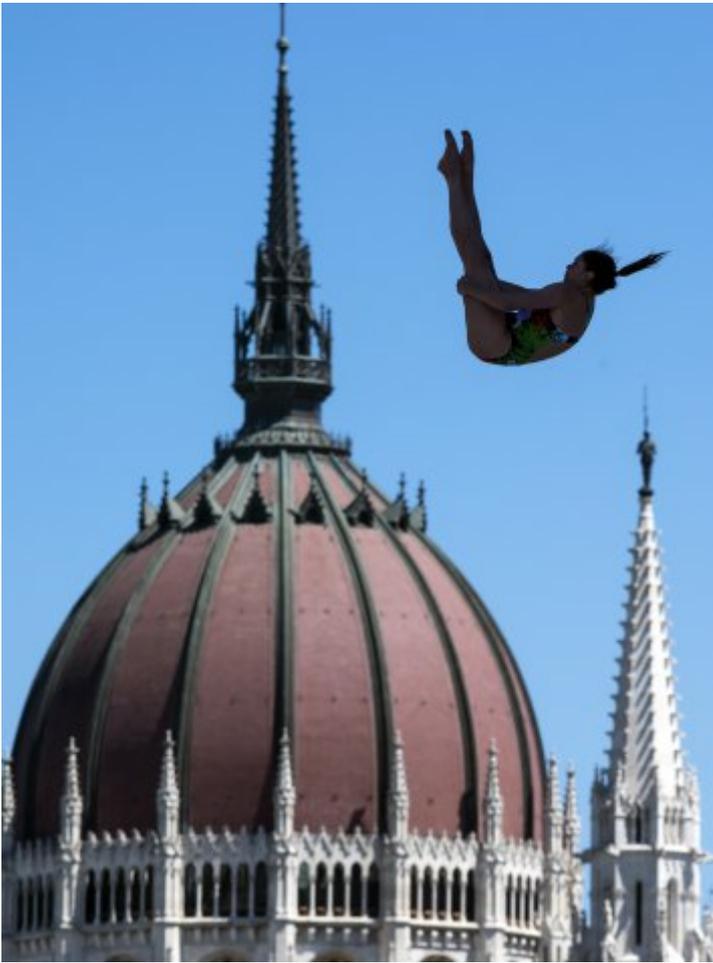
Iffland, 25 years old, had already medalled in a recent FINA competition, the 2017 High Diving World Cup in Abu Dhabi (UAE), where she was second, precisely behind Jimenez. Her last dive in Budapest, a back 3 somersaults, 1 twist on the pike position was well noted by the judges and allowed the Australian to keep the lead, after a successful combination in the third round. Mexico's Jimenez performed the best dive of the session, a flawless back, 3 somersaults in the pike position (DD 4.0, the highest from the medallists' group), earning 110.00 points, but that wasn't enough to catch Iffland for the gold. As with the Australian, Jimenez first award in a FINA event had also been the World Cup, earlier this year.



Adriana Jimenez (MEX) in action - Photo by Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

For Yana Nestsiarava, from Belarus, this wasn't a novelty. Already third two years ago in Kazan, the 24-year-old has also earned bronze in the 2015 and 2017 editions of the World Cup, respectively in Cozumel (MEX) and Abu Dhabi (UAE).

The competition in Budapest had two notable absences, Lysanne Richard (CAN), winner of the 2016 World Cup, and Rachelle Simpson (USA), 2015 world champion and also gold medallist of the 2014 and 2015 World Cup. While the Canadian great had a last-minute injury, the North American star had professional obligations that could not make possible the trip to Hungary.



Yana Nestsiarava (BLR) - Photo by Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

In terms of medallists at past FINA events, Ginger Huber (USA) was only ninth this time, while Cesilie Carlton (USA), the first world champion in 2013, concluded in sixth. Anna Bader, from Germany, provisional leader after Round 1 could not maintain the rhythm and was fifth. Helena Merten, from Australia, second at the 2016 World Cup was seventh in Budapest.

QUOTES

Rhiannan Iffland (AUS), gold

“It was definitely an amazing couple of days! The venue is great, and the view from the top of the platform is outstanding. We have the best view of all aquatic sports! In high diving, we are a very tight community, the same group travels around the world for six months, and we are always together. It’s nice to have someone around in such a dangerous and extreme sport”.

“It’s always the same feeling up there: we are always afraid. We are never 100% comfortable there; that is why we need a lot of mental strength to overcome that feeling. The only way to work that is by training a lot and say to yourself that you have done those movements and those dives a lot of times before. If you think, 20m is the double of 10m, so as we normally train in 10m, we have to work the dive into parts and then put it together when we are in a high diving competition”.

“People in Australia are now more aware for this sport. Media coverage is getting more intense and we hope that additional facilities will be available for diving. All this makes more people to come to the sport and will definitively help in raising our level”.

“The first person I contact when I have finished? Definitively my sister, as my biggest fan is my seven-year-old nephew!”

Adriana Jimenez (MEX), silver

“Everyone works so hard, we are a big family! And I feel so proud to belong to this family. Doing such a dangerous activity requires being surrounded by people with good energy and harmony around us. We know that there is always someone there, ready to help and comfort us”.

“I was a former 10m platform diver, who used to cry every time I was on the edge of the board. It may seem incredible but now I am performing from twice higher. The fear is always present, but you need to hold it and concentrate on your dive. How I do it? I don’t think too much on it, I deeply breath and I dive. I also do some relaxation and meditation exercises, so that I can keep my nerves away. I work with a psychologist in Mexico and this is positive to help us putting ourselves together”.

Jacqueline Valente (BRA), eighth

“It was my first time in Budapest and I got in love with this city. The scenario was magnificent and the venue really unforgettable. I had some problems with my armstand, but I managed to remain focused for my fourth attempt, which was quite good. It was the most difficult combination of this final, a DD 4.3, a new dive for me, and I was quite happy the way I performed. This proves that mentally I am quite strong... For the remaining of the season, I am competing in the Red Bull circuit and quite happy with my performances. You can see that DD is raising among women, which proves the evolution of the sport”.

Ginger Huber (USA), ninth

“It was a really exciting competition, held in a very nice city. It was my first time in Budapest and I liked it a lot. The only problem was the venue dressing, too much blueish. This is a difficulty for the divers, as we have to differentiate the water and the sky. For me personally, it was quite challenging and I had to work a lot mentally to get myself safe. As for the level of competition, it was amazing – the girls are progressing a lot. Myself and my next objectives? One dive and one competition at the time (Huber will complete 43 years old in December)”.
