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## Russian prodigy charges two golds

Olga Kamardina, FINA correspondent in Hungary

With a convincing victory of the Russian wonder Varvara Subbotina, the 16th FINA World Junior Artistic Swimming Championships took a flying start in Budapest.

The first competition day included a tremendous Opening Ceremony and two final sessions: for the Solo Technical and Free programs. Both contests were hugely dominated by Russia. Varvara Subbotina managed to repeat her winning story of Kazan-2016. Like 2 years ago, she hit “a class-signature” over 90 points marks to prove her strength. Ukraine and Japan were the other two nations at the podiums.

Read on to learn how the events unfolded.



## SOLO TECHNICAL

Defending overall champion Russia successfully launched its campaign in Budapest in the Solo Technical program. Varvara Subbotina predictably captured gold with a smooth swim to the moody music of “Just say: I love her” by a top Russian opera barytone singer Dmitry Hvorostovsky. Her overall once again registered impeccable 92.6551 points, with 36.8551 on the artistic impression, and although it was some 3 points less than her season’ best, earned on the Hungarian soil two months earlier, on Leg #5 of the FINA Artistic Swimming World Series, 95.3330, the winner did confess on being happy.

“It is very important to take a good start, - Varvara Subbotina said. – I am very pleased as today I have managed to do so. I love swimming in Budapest, I love the Duna Arena, and the city is pretty lucky for me. I have a lot of fans here, who usually come to shout for me. I have being doing a very tough schedule this year, and the FINA World Junior Championships is one of the major places to show my best”.

Silver medalist Marta Fiedina of Ukraine swam confidently to a traditional Ukrainian song, which melodiously narrated the story of the “Swans, which are flying”. The program already cashed her 2 silvers at the just finished European Junior Artistic Swimming Championships in Helsinki. Marta was expressive and impressive, and did her job well, and although there was a good points gap to the first place holder, this did not have any negative impact on her tasting the silver victory.



“Everything goes well so far, - the Ukrainian prodigy commented. – This is my first ever piece of the Junior Worlds, and besides, I even managed to register a good overall. I love the routine and its character. The Ukrainian music is at the same time very rhythmic, and it the rhythm helps a lot to perform complicated technical elements. My program is not new, I have been working on it all the season long, and my efforts are paid off”.

Japanese Mana Fujiwara had the third-highest solo technical score on the “Hunter” program. Her choreographer Mayumi Uchiyama, which has been working with the National team for some 10 years to now, supplied her with a complex routine of rare precision. According to the specialist, a total of 87.9752 points with 34.9752 for the artistic impression, was not her impeccable best.

“Her impression mark could have been even higher, - explained Uchiyama. – But honestly, that was one of the best swim of my junior swimmer. However, we have to admit, she was not perfect technically, and had a number of mistakes. Our opponents were very strong, and this is why we are very happy on travelling to the podium”.

The fourth best score belonged to Iberian Irene Jimeno, performing to “The mascaraed is over” by Jimmy Scott – 86.3972 points. She managed to improve to herself by some 0.5 points, comparing to the just finished European Junior Championships. Italian Francesca Zunino came fifth, 85.2256 points, as Belarus star Vasilina Khondoshka landed on sixth, 84.6691.

A very fresh face appeared surprisingly high on 7th as Ryong Kyong Han staged a ballet-themed Swan Lake performance.

Scoring 84.2766, she astonished the crowd rallying down Canadian Emily Armstrong and Kate Shortman of Great Britain, who finished on 83.7689 and 83.1096 points respectively.



SOLO FREE

The competition for the best routine of the day came as a duel "Subbotina vs. Subbotina". The Solo Free Final turned out to be "the Russian to beat" third swim during the 24-hours time, as she did technical solo and the very program in preliminaries of the same morning. Although realizing the score shall not add anything to her afternoon total, the "enormous flexibility star" did not save her energy and emotions. Starting off with her signature deckwork pose, like a cat, her tiptoes under the chin, Varya performed graciously her "Batman returns – Selina transforms" program. None doubted that she enjoyed the swim very much, and the high marks by the judges and applause by spectators were to prove it. Her morning session registered a marvelous 92.5667 points, whereas in the afternoon she got even better to add one point, 93.5667.

"I love this music and I love solo free. My emotions are still running high, so don't expect me to analyse big things, - confessed Varvara Subbotina afterwards. - I think I did a good job, but right now I cannot assess my overall, whether I've made a smaller or a bigger mistake. My coach and choreographer of the program Tatiana Danchenko will give her feedback later".



Like in Helsinki, silver went to Marta Fiedina of Ukraine, 90.7667. The Ukrainian, performing to an energizing Adiemus music left Japanese Mana Fujiwara 2 points behind, 89.3333. Asian was speechless and cried with the joy tears, congratulated by her coach and her teammates.

“My task was to do a clean program,” – said bronze medalist of the 16th FINA World Junior Artistic Swimming Championships in Solo Free. – I am very grateful to my coach, which always has the right words to support me and drive forward. The competition is very tough and my opponents are pretty strong. It is a big honor to be on podium in such a company,” - she added.

“This is my second podium of the day, which is a good achievement, - commented on her Solo Free silver Marta Fiedina of Ukraine. – I scored over 90 points, which is a good omen. I have managed to put all my strength together and present a strong swim. The music was a bit complicated, but it was our idea to create an IQ-routine, which makes you think”.



A number of strong free solo programs were performed by other nations, including Spain, Canada and Belarus, all of which managed to improve on their preliminary totals.

The 16th FINA World Junior Artistic Swimming Championships, staged in Budapest until 22 July, 2018, will proceed tomorrow with 2 more medal sets on offer - in the Duet Free and Duet Technical.

**Competition results.** 16th FINA World Junior Artistic Swimming World Championships

Day 1 July, 18

### **Solo Technical Final:**

1. Subbotina Varvara (RUS) 92.6551, 2. Fiedina Marta (UKR) 88.6030, 3. Fujiwara Mana (JPN) 87.9752, 4. Kontic Jelena (SRB) 92.4819, 5. Khandoshka Vasilina (BLR) 84.6661, 6. Arellano Fernanda (MEX) 85.0000, 7. Jimeno Irene (ESP) 86.3972, 8. Zunino Francesca (ITA) 85.2256, 9. Khandoshka Vasilina (BLR) 84.6691, 10. Han Kyong Ryong (PRK) 84.2766, 11. Armstrong Emily (CAN) 83.7689, 12. Shortman Kate (GBR) 83.1096, 13. Peschl Noemi (SUI) 82.1760, 14. Taxopoulou Anna Maria (GRE) 81.4964, 15. Mechnig Lara (LIE) 81.4683, 16. Arellano Fernanda (MEX) 78.4030, 17. Zonzini Jasmine (SMR) 76.9928, 18. Pinter Yvette (AUT) 76.3865, 19. Veloso Anna Giulia (BRA) 75.3493, 20. Hiekal Hanna (EGY) 74.9187, 21. Mazankova Vendula (CZE) 74.5000, 22. David Janka (HUN) 73.8843, 23. Szczepanska Swietlana (POL) 72.8127, 24. Butorac Matea (CRO) 72.5264, 25. Ambrazaitė Natalija (LTU) 72.4091, 26. Yong Miya (SGP) 71.8022, 27. Kontic Jelena (SRB) 71.7171, 28. Gazzard Kiera (AUS) 71.6749, 29. De Leon Clara (URU) 70.8556, 30. Onal Ide Ezgi (TUR) 70.61196, 31. Carrasquillo Lorens (PUR) 67.4617, 32. Croes Kainah (ARU) 64.4218, 33. Torino Giulia (RSA) 58.1444, 34. Ekneligoda Tharudini (SRI) 56.6512.

### **Solo Free Final:**

1. Subbotina Varavara (RUS) 93.5667, 2. Fiedina Marta (UKR) 90.7667, 3. Fujiwara Mana (JPN) 88.3333, 4. Tio Iris (ESP) 88.2667, 5. Khandoshka Vasilina (BLR) 87.0667, 6. Armstrong Emily (CAN) 85.9000, 7. Zunino Francesca (ITA) 84.4333, 8. Han Kyong Ryong (PRK) 84.3667, 9. Shortman Kate (GBR) 83.8333, 10. Dipla Ifigeneia (GRE) 82.1667, 11. Mechnig Lara (LIE) 82.0000, 12. Peschl Noemi (SUI) 81.3000.

### **Competition schedule**

#### **Day 2 - July 19,2018**

10:00 Duet Free Preliminary

15:00 Duet Technical Final

19:30 Duet Free Final

**Day 3 - July 20, 2018**

18:00 Team Technical Final

**Day 4 - July 21, 2018**

11:00 Team Free Preliminary

17:00 Mixed Duet Technical Final

18:00 Team Free Final (12)

**Day 5 - July 22, 2018**

11:00 Free Combination Preliminary

16:00 Mixed Duet Free Final

17:00 Free Combination Final

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