

DWS-2019 in Kazan, Day 1: Chinese and Ukraine strike it lucky

Olga Kamardina, FINA Correspondent in Russia

For the Chinese divers their luck was definitely in as the fourth leg of the FINA/CNSG Diving World Series got launched in Kazan this Friday.

In the best spirit of 3 previous stops in Beijing, Sagami-hara and Montreal, they had a good start sweeping away 3 out of 4 golds on offer on Competition day 1.

In the morning session Yang Hao and Lian Junje grabbed their second title of the year as their compatriots Yuxi Chen/Haoyan Yuan, but 14 years old, celebrated by victory their international debut in the women's contest. Evening session had a lot of surprises in store for all. Read on to learn how the events unfolded.



Photo (courtesy to LOC): Russian Bondar/Minibaev, silver medalists in the men's 10m synchro platform

Women's 10m synchro platform: Chinese youngsters sliced favorites

China opened another successful meet of the year, conquering women's 10m synchro platform. It could have been another predictable win for the Asian nation if not for the age of the eventual champions. Yuxi Chen/Haoyan Yuan, but 14 years old, completed dives with a high degree of difficulty and challenged clear favorites of the meet, North Korean Kim Mi Rae and Jo Jin Mi, who finished victorious two weeks ago in Canada. Keeping to the shade of their elder opponents for the first 3 rounds, they had been close enough to make good use of their 4th dive. Inward 3.5 Somersault tuck fueled the young rookies by a solid 82.56 and placed them on top. By the end of the final, they even improved on their margin for the overall of 338.70.

“We had been aiming a high merit, - confessed **Fu Yu Chao, coach of the team China.** – Two out of three FINA/CNSG Diving World Series Legs had been won by compatriots Zhang Jiaqi/Lu Wei. Today we have scored another gold for our nation, and we are pleased we have managed to show good shape in Kazan. It is a very friendly city and we love to come back here every time”.

North Koreans won silver on 315.42 points to add up to the gold of Montreal. Jo Jin Mi has been diving with Kim Mi Rae but for a couple of months now, however their chemistry looks nice indeed.

“Not a bad result at all, - commented on the overall gained **Song Hui Choe, coach of the North Korea.** – Of course, after a gold medal in Canada we had been hoping to reach the top once again, however silver is also rewarding. There were some minor mistakes in the dives, but they are all not critical. We will look into them later to be better competitive for the major meets of the year”.



Photo (courtesy to LOC): Chinese teenagers Chen/Yuan victorious in the women's 10m synchro platform

Russian Ekaterina Beliaeva and Iuliia Timoshinina collected bronze on 292.20 points. The score could have been a bit higher but for their closing Back 2.5 Somersaults 1.5Twists, where both synchronization and execution left very much to be desired.

“This is our first medal in the Diving World Series-2019, and it is a good achievement to check-in on the podium, - said **Iuliia Timoshinina.** – Although we won Diving Grand Prix in Rostock

earlier this year and 2018 European Championships in this event, we realise we are not at all perfect and there is a lot of work ahead of us. Compliments to my young partner who is a mere junior. Her debut was pretty well done”.

The main disappointment of the morning came from the bronze medalist of 2016 Olympic Games and vice-champion of 2015 on the 10m synchro platform Canadian Meagan Benfeito teaming Caeli Mckay. Regarded as sure favorites, they finished lowly 5th on 272,70 points. British Eden Cheng/Lois Toulson came away a step higher, earning 284.28.

10m platform synchro men: Chinese forces still impressive

In the absence of Olympic legends Cao Yuan and Chen Aisen, who set the 2019 season’s best to a sky high 494.55 in Beijing, Chinese driving forces still looked competitive in the 10m men’s synchro platform. World and Junior Worlds champion Lian turned out to be a good match for Hao, who used to be a rookie partner for Chen Aisen since 2017 and won mixed 3m title in Kazan FINA Worlds-2015 pairing Han Wang. The gifted duo proved once again their top diving skills, adding one more gold to their jewels box.

Top-scoring all the way through to the final buzzer, they were visibly driven by their own strive to outscore themselves. They did not reach the Montreal height of 464.52 points, however their most impressive dive highlighted the midst of the contest (Reverse 3.5 Somersaults tuck earned the Chinese duo 86.70 points).



Photo (courtesy to LOC): Yang and Lian of China, winners of the men's 10m synchro platform

“We are glad we have managed to collect a solid overall of 444.18 points. This is the 4th gold for our nation in this event, so we have strengthened our positions atop of the chart. We are very grateful to our coaching staff, who has done a lot to make this podium happen”, - said **Lian Junjie of China.**

Minor merits were between Victor Minibaev/Aleksandr Bondar of Russia and Thomas Daley/Matthew Lee of the Great Britain. Posting a steady list full of high difficulty dives, local hopes did their job well in each round except the fifth. Having a lot of splashes at the entry after the Forward 4.5 Somersaults tuck, they left the door open for their challengers, however British did not take the chance right and stopped on third. Russians posted a confident 5255B getting 82.08 points to grasp their third silver of the season on 10m men’s

synchro platform.

“We could have won gold on the one hand, and on the other, we could have done our list much better, - commented on their performance **Victor Minibaev**. – There were too many mistakes during the final, so our silver is almost a matter of chance. All our competitors had had a lot of mistakes either. The only excuse for us now is that we have been under pressure of loads preparing to the major starts of the year”.

In contrast to the Russian side stood the mood of the bronze winning British. Their best dive of the day earned them 81.60 points as overall reached 395.82.

“We are happy about the medal, and we realize that our opponents were very very strong, - said **Matthew Lee**. - We did a couple of good dives, but today wasn't the best performance, particularly that's true for 207B and 109C, where as dive #5 have been consistent and well done”.

Australian Stacey Declan/Bedgood Domonic finished on fourth, 379.74, followed by Malaysians Jellson Jabillin/Hanis Nazirul Jaya Surya, 334.26.

3m springboard synchro women: China, Australia and Ukraine on podium



Photo (courtesy to LOC): Abel/Citrini-Beaulieu of Canada out of the podium in the women's 3m synchro springboard

Lin Shan/Chang Yani of China finished atop, 18 points clear of their next challengers. They turned out to be the most consistent duo in the competition. There was only one lug in their program, happened on round #3 where they executed Back 2.5 Somersault pike and deserved a number of low marks.

“We never track opponents during the competitions, - confessed **Chang Yani**. - This is the best way to get concentrated on ourselves and our motivation. The win is good on the one hand, but on the other, the scoring was not top. We have done much better results even competing in China, at the National championships”.

Olympic bronze medalists and reigning #2 in the overall chart Australian Anabelle Smith/Maddison Keeney were placed second on 283.98 points. Their silver never looked as a sure bet as after 2 “compulsory” dives they had been only 4th.

“The first dives may seem easy, as their DD is limited, but the task in reality is pretty challenging – to show accuracy performing the elements technically, - said **Maddison Keeney**. – This is not at all easy! We were not great in this aspect today, so we have to draw conclusions and work much harder in training sessions”.

Another surprise bronze landed into the hands of Ukraine, whereas Viktoriya Kesar and Anna Pysmenska were not initially viewed as top podium contenders. Starting lowly 8th, they took their time to recover – both physically and psychologically, and showed their best dive of the day Forward 3.5 Somersault pike one round before the end of the competition.

As their overall reached 273.60 points, they narrowly overtook host Russians Uliana Kliueva and Vitaliia Koroleva, finishing on 272.10 points.

“Bronze is a good achievement for us, and we are very happy. – shared her emotions of the medal **Viktoriya Kesar of Ukraine**. – It will be a good motivation for us for the future. The season is pretty long and there are a number of major competitions ahead of us, so we will keep on working”.

3m springboard synchro men: Ukraine wins chaotic contest



Photo (courtesy to LOC): Winners of the men's 3m synchro springboard

Ukrainian men celebrated a breakthrough win on the 3m synchro springboard. Oleksandr Gorshkovozyov and

Oleg Kolodiy had never before in their lives topped podium of the FINA/CNSG Diving World Series.

As a matter of fact, the champions' names as well as podium residents were very difficult to predict both - early on start and later in course of the competition. The top three had been rotating in each of the six final rounds. There was not a single duo who did an excellent job. Minor and major mistakes were seen here and there. Russia, Great Britain and Ukraine were seen atop at least once in this unpredictable battle, where as the ever favorite China could stay competitive for only 3 rounds.

Victorious Oleksandr Gorshkovozov and Oleg Kolodiy of Ukraine could not keep their emotions realizing they were #1.

“We are very happy, - they exclaimed. - We have finally climbed up on top. We had been missing victories badly and worked very very hard, so now we shall have a new impulse to train. We are not thinking of our mistakes now”.

According to Evgeny Kuznetsov of Russia, who had been earning medals in Kazan since 2015, performance of 2019 gave him much food for analyses. However hard they are going to work with Nikita Shleikher before the major competitions of the year, he reminded that pairing him was a sort of forced circumstances and not the good will.

“In February my long term partner Ilya Zakharov got injured on the knee, - he said in particular. - So we had to consider this. His recovery goes well, and I do believe that he will be in good shape by the FINA World Championships in Korea”.

Mexican Ernesto Yahel Castillo Huerta/Manuel Juan Hernandez Celaya proceeded traditions of their decorated teammates Ocampo/Pacheco adding bronze to their 3 silvers. Totaling 400.53, they edged out Canadians Philippe Gagne/Francois Imbeau-Dulac, 399.39.

“We had been diving together for long, but parted and got together several times already, - highlighted emotional **Ernesto Yahel Castillo Huerta**. - Kazan's bronze is a good motivation for us and, of course, we will be eyeing to qualify to the FINA World Chamionships this year”.



Photo (courtesy to LOC): Kesar/Pysmenska of Ukraine, bronze medalists in the women's 3m synchro springboard

After the Competition Day 1 of the FINA/CNSG Diving World Series #4, China counts 3 golds, and Ukraine - 1, as 5 other nations checked in the podium of Kazan already. The three-day event is underway in the Tatars capital, reaching its midst tomorrow. On Saturday, May 11, the medal offer includes women's 10m platform, men's 3m springboard as well as the mixed synchro 10m platform.

Competition results. FINA/CNSG Diving World Series 2019. Leg 4.

Day 1 May, 10

10m platform synchro women

1. CHEN Yuxi/YUAN Haoyan (CHN) 338.70
2. KIM Mi Rae/JO Jin Mi (PRK) 315.42
3. BELIAEVA Ekaterina/TIMOSHININA Iuliia (RUS) 292.20
4. CHENG Eden/TOULSON Lois (GBR) 284.28
5. BENFEITO Meaghan/McKAY Caeli (CAN) 272.70

10m platform synchro men

1. YANG Hao/LIAN Junjie (CHN) 444.18
2. BONDAR Aleksandr/MINIBAEV Viktor (RUS) 403.02
3. DALEY Tomas/ LEE Matthew (GBR) 395.82
4. BADGGOOD Domonic/STACEY Declan (AUS) 379.74
5. JABILLIN Jellson/JAYA SURYA Hanis Nazirul (MAS) 334.26

3m springboard synchro women

1. LIN Shan/CHANG Yani (CHN) 302.01
2. KEENEY Maddison/SMITH Anabelle (AUS) 283.98
3. KESAR Viktoriya/PYSMENSKA Anna (UKR) 273.60
4. KLIUEVA Uliana/KOROLEVA Vitaliia (RUS) 272.10

5. REID Grace/TORRANCE Katherine (GBR) 270.63
6. JANSEN Inge/ van DUIJN Celine (NED) 266.70
7. ABEL Jennifer/CITRINI BEAULIEU Melissa (?AN) 262.95
8. NG Yan Yee/SABRI Nur Dhabitah Binti (MAS) 262.74

3m springboard synchro men

1. GORSHKOVOZOV Oleksandr/KOLODIY Oleg (UKR) 403.26
 2. KUZNETSOV Evgenii/SHLEIKHER Nikita (RUS) 401.94
 3. CASTILLO HUERTA Yahel Ernesto/CELAYA HERNANDEZ Juan Manuel (MEX) 400.53
 4. GAGNE Philippe/IMBEAU-DULAC Francois (CAN) 399.39
 5. GOODFELLOW Daniel/LAUGHER Jack (GBR) 385.62
 6. WU Luxian/WANG Zongyuan (CHN) 365.73
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