

London opens its doors once again to divers for the 2019 FINA/CNSG World Series

Ashley Newman, FINA Correspondent in Great Britain

The fifth and final leg of the 2019 Diving World Series has landed in London at the site of the 2012 Olympics, the London Aquatics Centre, which will once again play host to the Diving World Series after a four-year absence from the event. London follows Japan, China, Canada and Russia in the series.

Great Britain's poster boys Thomas Daley and Jack Laugher are excited by another chance to compete in front of a home crowd, as Daley said:

“This might be my best World Series yet and I'm hoping I can finish well in front of a vocal home crowd. I love this venue, I have loads of great memories from it and I have the bonus of training here every day.”

Olympic champion Jack Laugher MBE agreed that he would be buoyed by the home crowd, especially after gaining confidence in Kazan when he took gold for the first time this year on the world stage.

“I can't wait for the action to get underway now. I was really pleased to win gold last weekend in Kazan and feel things are really starting to come together at the right time. Competing in London is always special, especially having won gold and silver at the European Championships in this venue in 2016.”

London will be no different to Kazan in terms of the young crop of Chinese divers, including the likes of Lian Junjie and Yang Hao, hoping to carry the mantle from their successful older teammates Cao Yuan and Chen Aisen who will again be absent from the line up.

Two-time world champion Hao took double gold in Kazan in the men's 10m and men's 10m synchro and will be hoping to improve on his current fifth place ranking.

He said: “I hope I can perform well in London – I have competed here once before in 2015 and the venue is good. It won't be easy but I'm looking forward to it. My older teammates will teach me.”



Battling the young Chinese divers in the individual events are Daley and Laugher, who will be hoping to claim golds again as they have done in the last two legs of the series in both the men's 10m platform and men's 3m springboard respectively. They will also be aiming to retain their top rankings for the series finale in those events. This would be the icing on the cake for the two British divers, setting them up nicely in their preparations for the Olympics in Tokyo next year.

After turning around a poor start in Kazan to claim individual gold in the women's 3m springboard, Canada's 27-year-old Jennifer Abel admitted that her experience in the sport had meant that her performances were now based on a more mental game. She will also be one to watch at this event.

Abel agreed that the atmosphere in London would help spur on the athletes and explained that she shared fond memories of London along with the Brits, having won her Olympic bronze here in 2012.

"I'm pretty happy about my year so far and last week I got to win my first gold medal of the year in Kazan, so I was pretty excited about that, especially before this week, which brings back good memories for me. I got my Olympic medal here in London seven years ago so I'm really happy to be back here and pretty excited to contend this week," she said.

The synchro events will open the three-day competition on Friday 17 May starting with the women's 10m platform synchro followed by the men's event, and then the women's and men's 3m springboard synchro final. Saturday's finals will then see the individual women's 10m and the men's 3m, before the mixed 10m synchro. The last day of the London leg, and the entire series, will then showcase the women's 3m, men's 10m and mixed 3m synchro finals.
