

## China, Russia collect more hardware on Junior Diving World Championships Day 4, Daley joins the show

FINA Communication Department

The fourth day (Friday, September 19) of the 17th FINA Junior Diving World Championships in Aachen (GER) bore witness to the continuation of what has become a Chinese domination of the event. In the three events contested on this day, the boy's 'A' 1m springboard, boy's 'B' 10m platform, and the girl's 'A' + 'B' synchronised 3m springboard, all the gold medals on offer went to divers on the Chinese team. Even in the platform competition, which featured the young (13 years old) British diving sensation Thomas Daley, fresh from his first Olympic appearance in Beijing, it was China's Bo Qiu who would reach the top of the podium.

### Boy's 'A' 1m springboard final (competitors born 1990/1991/1992)

The first final of the day, the boy's 'A' 1m springboard, was a three-way fight for the gold by Guojun Xu (CHN), who would end up winning with a total score of 567.90, Evgeny Kuznetsov (RUS), who took silver with a total of 560.30, and Longji Yu (CHN), who settled for bronze with a total of 552.10. These were also the top-three to advance from the preliminary, and in the final round their rivalry brought the best out in them and their outstanding performances set themselves apart from the rest of the field.

Xu clinched the gold by consistently delivering dives for which he received at least several marks of 8.0 or higher and never below 7.0. Technically-speaking, his first and his third dives, an inward 2 ½ somersault tuck (DD 3.1) and a back 2 ½ somersault tuck (DD 3.0) respectively, were both excellent efforts in regard to the marks he received. But it was his ability to finish strongly, however, by delivering a fourth dive (a reverse 2 ½ somersault pike, DD 3.2) that earned him marks of 8.0 almost across the board and 76.80 total points (the highest scoring dive of the round), which allowed him to retain the gold.

Kuznetsov meanwhile, was struggling to reach the uniformity of precision that was giving Xu the lead. He started formidably with a formidable inward 2 ½ somersault tuck that gave him 74.40 points, but then his next three dives didn't quite have the sparkle to surpass Xu. After three dives the two leaders were tied, but then Kuznetsov's fourth dive was lacklustre (earning one mark of 6.5) and put him about 10 points behind his rival. Despite a great finale, a reverse 1 ½ somersault 2 ½ twists free, for which he received 72.00 points and all 8.0's or higher, he had to take silver.

In third was another Chinese prospect that would have been slightly disappointed with the bronze after having advanced in first from the preliminary. His first effort, a back 2 ½ somersault tuck, gave him a comparatively poor start with 63.00 points. He then struggled through his next three dives to earn scores of a level that would make him a threat to the leaders, but couldn't manage to break the 7.5 barrier. His last dive was respectable enough, but it was already too late to reach a higher placement. Nevertheless, the Chinese team can be satisfied, having won two more medals from this event.

Overall, 37 boys from 27 different countries competed in the preliminary of this event, of which 12 advanced to the final.

## Boy's 'B' 10m platform final (competitors born 1993/1994)

As well as being a unique exhibition of ability from two of the finest young divers in the world, this event was true showdown between China and Great Britain. Britain's Thomas Daley was one of "stars" in attendance at these Championships, having already received widespread acclaim in his home country and throughout the international diving community for reaching Olympic skill level at the tender age of 13. But in Aachen, he faced difficult competition from China's own Bo Qiu, just one of the many young guns China has mobilised to ensure its monopoly over the sport will be maintained.

It is Qiu who now has the title in this event with a final total of 551.85 points, after performing four solid dives. His first effort, an inward 3 ½ somersault tuck (DD 3.2) gave him an explosive start and scores ranging from 8.5 to 10.0. His second dive, of a higher degree of difficulty, was just as steady and gave him a total score of 91.80 points. His third dive, a back 3 ½ somersault pike (DD 3.6) was nothing short of excellent, garnering him three 10.0's from the judges and a total of 104.40 points, the highest score awarded for any single dive in the final round. But he still wasn't far enough ahead of Daley to guarantee himself the gold. He had to maintain his resolve for his last dive. He did. His final, valiant effort was a back 2 ½ somersault 2 ½ twists pike with a degree of difficulty of 3.8, which he executed well. Earning marks between 7.5 and 9.0 and a total of 93.10, it was enough to defeat Daley and take the win.

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Michelle Cabassol

Daley meanwhile, was actually leading for the first half of the competition and he too, had an explosive third dive that gave him a whopping score and five marks of 10.0 from judges. But the dive he chose, a back 3 ½ somersault tuck, has a degree of difficulty of just 3.3, so even with 10.0's and an overall score of 99.00 points he was still two points behind Qui. Daley's last dive, although certainly performed well (giving him 81.60 points), again was not of the level of difficulty or spectacular enough to squeak-by Qiu, who won by a heartbreaking two points. The young Briton therefore, took silver with a total of 549.60 points.

In third was Dongliang Wu (CHN), who had an admirable final, but with a set of dives that were not of the level of difficulty that Daley's and Qiu's programmes offered. His final dive was particularly nice, a back 2 ½ somersault 1 ½ twists pike (DD 3.4), for which he earned a total of 85.00 points, but he was already well

out of reach of the higher medals. Wu finished with the bronze (in a total of 474.00 points), although about 75 points behind the top two competitors, whose magnitude of diving skill at such a young age is virtually unparalleled. China, in the end, could celebrate more hardware.

Overall, 28 boys from 17 different countries competed in the preliminary of this event, of which 12 advanced to the final.

### **Girl's 'A' + 'B' synchronised 3m springboard final (competitors born 1990/1991/1992 + competitors born 1993/1994)**

This last final of the day was another Chinese victory, as Qinxin Zhao and Han Wang maintained the golden standard now expected from the young Chinese representing diving's superpower nation in Aachen this week. The pair took the lead early with two beautiful opening efforts, a forward dive pike (DD 2.0) and a back dive pike (DD 2.0), both of which gave them marks of 8.5 and 9.0 across the board. Their third dive was weaker, giving them judgements ranging from 4.0 to 7.5, but the higher degree of difficulty of 3.0 allowed them to hold the lead. They concluded their programme with two more solid dives (with a DD 3.0) and good scores, especially their last effort, a reverse 2 ½ somersault pike that gave them total points of 73.80, the highest of the final round and giving China another gold. They won with a total of 300.90.

Silver went to the American pair of Michelle Cabassol and Kaylea Arnett about ten points behind, as they finished with a total of 290.76. Their respectable programme was accentuated with two lovely concluding dives, a back 2 ½ somersault tuck (DD 2.8) and a reverse 2 1/5 somersault tuck (DD 2.8). Both dives gave them total points of 67.20 and therefore secured them the silver ahead of Russia's Maria Smirnova and Svetlana Filippova who took bronze with a final overall score of 285.30. Smirnova and Filippova dove consistently, and technically-speaking their programme was highlighted by their second effort, a forward dive pike, and their final dive, a back 1 ½ somersault 2 ½ twists free. Their bronze was well-deserved and gave the Russian team, who is having a successful Championships overall, another medal.

In total, 14 pairs from as many countries competed in this event.

The next finals (on Saturday, September 20) are the boy's 'B' 3m springboard and the girl's 'A' platform.

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