

Three more medals for next generation of Chinese divers on Day 2 of World Junior Championships

FINA Communication Department

Aachen 2008

Day 2 (Wednesday, September 17, 2008) of the 17th FINA Junior Diving World Championships saw more medals go almost exclusively to young Chinese and Russian aquatic aerialists, although Canadian rising star Jennifer Abel took silver in the girl's 'A' 3m springboard.

Boy's 'B' 1m springboard final (competitors born 1993/1994)

Considering the results of the boy's 'B' 1m springboard event, China has plenty of divers ready to continue the tradition of global domination the country already enjoys in this sport. Taking gold was Dongliang Wu (CHN) with a final total score of 476.20, while silver went to his compatriot Peng Wang with a score of 439.85. Russia, which also has a formidable reputation for grooming excellent divers, and therefore remains one of China's strongest opponents, must be satisfied with the bronze earned by Sergey Zhdanov (RUS) with a total score of 428.95. In fourth was Cuba's Abel Ramirez Tellez, whose respectable performance garnered a total score of 414.00.

Wu and Wang must have been happy with the consistency of their control over this event, as they had also placed first and second, respectively, in the preliminary round. Zhdanov however, barely even made it through to the final, having placed a mere 12th in the preliminary! His rise to third place and a podium position therefore, is an admirable comeback. Tellez too, registered an excellent improvement in the final, having qualified in the preliminary in just 11th place.

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Boy's 'B' 1m springboard podium

The final itself was an all-Wu affair, with no other competitor showing him considerable opposition. He performed his four dives steadily, earning all marks for every dive between 7.5 and 8.5. His first and last dives, a forward 2 ½ somersault pike and a reverse 1 ½ somersault 1 ½ twists free respectively (both DD 2.6), earned him particularly high scores from the judges. Meanwhile, Wang also performed well, although his programme was slightly less difficult and he faltered on his third dive, a reverse 2 ½ somersault tuck. He finished strong, but didn't earn a single score above 8.0, and so could not surpass Wu.

Zhdanov, all the while, climbed the ladder. The programme he chose was the most difficult of the medallists. He started strong, with a solid forward 2 ½ somersault pike, which gave him all scores of 7.5 and 8.0 across the board; marks comparable to those of the winners. Although technically-speaking this was the "easiest" dive he would have to complete (with a DD 2.6), the top-marks would be a timely confidence-booster at such a pressure-filled moment. He wavered on his second dive, which was his hardest (an inward 2 ½ somersault tuck, DD 3.1), but then finished the competition smoothly enough to earn a medal.

Overall, 33 boys from 21 different countries competed in the preliminary of this event, of which 12 advanced to the final.

Girl's 'A' 3m springboard final (competitors born 1990/1991/1992)

Here again, representatives from three reputable diving countries prevailed. Another gold medal went to young Chinese aquatic ambassador Han Wang (total score of 497.15), who could someday be a national hero; while the Canadian team in Aachen celebrated its first trip to the podium with the silver medal performance of Jennifer Abel (total score of 475.55). In third and fourth were two Russian divers, Svetlana Filippova and Maria Smirnova, with scores of 473.20 and 444.15 respectively.

These girls were also the top-four finishers in the preliminary round, except with slightly different positioning. It was Abel who was originally in the lead, with Wang in second, followed by the two Russians in the same order as they finished in the final. It may have stayed that way too, except for a weak start by Abel in the final. For her first dive, an inward 2 ½ somersault pike, the judges gave her scores averaging at 6.5 (total score 60.00). When Wang executed the same first dive, she received average marks of 7.5 (total score 66.00) and therefore had a much better start.

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Girl's 'A' 3m springboard podium

The programmes of Abel and Wang were of the same degree of difficulty (the highest out of all the finalists), and they chose to perform the same dives, only in a slightly different order. Thus it is easy to follow how Wang out-performed Abel, except on the final dive of both, a forward 2 ½ somersault 1 twist pike, for which Abel garnered three 8.5's to out-score her opponent. But it was already too late. Like her elder Chinese predecessors, many of whom are fresh Olympic heroes at home, Wang's precision under pressure gave her the win.

Meanwhile the Russians crept along, especially Filippova, who fought nobly for the silver but couldn't manage to squeak by Abel with a programme that was slightly less difficult and marks generally in the range of 7.0. Smirnova, in the end, finished in fourth and well out of medal contention, despite having a great opening dive.

Overall, 33 girls from 23 different countries competed in the preliminary of this event, of which 12 advanced to the final.

The next finals to be contested (on Thursday, September 18) are the girl's 'A' 1m springboard, the girl's 'B' platform, and the boy's 'A' + 'B' 3m springboard syncho.
