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Young Chinese and Russian divers golden on Junior World Championships Day 1

Meghan Lynn

Johannes Donay (GER)

The world was introduced to some of the next generation of diving greats when the first finals of the 17th FINA Junior Diving World Championships in Aachen (GER) took place September 16, 2008.

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

Following the success of their older counterparts at the Beijing Olympics in August, two young Chinese divers took the top two podium spots in the girl's 'B' 1m springboard. Lin Qu took the gold and Wanying He the silver, with respective total scores of 377.60 and 365.50. The bronze medal went to Australia's Anabelle Smith with a score of 352.95.

It was anybody's guess who would be the final winner, as it was He who was the top finisher in the preliminary round with a total score of 349.10, but she was followed closely by Canada's Angelina Kroupko (347.80) and Qu (346.70), while Smith finished fourth (339.15).

In the final round, each diver performed just three dives, so the pressure was on. Qu performed steadily to earn her title,

executing three solid dives with degrees of difficulty (DD) between 2.3 and 2.4 to garner marks from the seven judges that were never below 7.5 or above 8.0. Her finest dive was a forward 2 1/2 somersault pike (DD 2.6), for which she received five scores of 8.0.

He was also consistent on her way to the silver medal, and even earned the highest single judgement in the final for her first dive, an inward 1 1/2 somersault pike (DD 2.4), for which Judge 2 awarded her an 8.5. Meanwhile, Smith was also struggling to retain a podium spot. She executed the most difficult dive of the final for her last dive, an inward 2 1/5 somersault tuck (DD 3.1). Although she received all marks between 5.0 and 5.5, it was a noble effort and she managed to take the bronze from Canada's Kroupko, who had to settle for fourth-place.

In total, 27 girls from 20 different countries competed in the preliminary of this event, of which 12 advanced to the final.

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Girl's 'B' 1m springboard podium

Boy's 'A' 3m springboard preliminary (competitors born 1990/1991/1992)

Another great diving nation, Russia, appears to have lots to look forward to after the young Evgeny Kuznetsov won the boy's 'A' 3m springboard title on the first day of the 17th FINA Junior Diving World Championships. Kuznetsov took gold by overcoming the silver medallist Guojun Xu (CHN) and bronze medal winner-at-home Johannes Donay of Germany. Kuznetsov's total score for the final round was 591.45, a clear win, while Xu and Donay finished with 568.40 and 560.25 respectively.

This win was a nice improvement for Kuznetsov, as he had placed just fifth in the preliminary. The initial winner appeared to be China's Longji Yu, who unfortunately would take his turn finishing fifth in the final round. Ever-looming was Ukraine's Dmytro Mezhenkiy, who settled for fourth in both the preliminary and the final sessions. Xu's silver medal was a bit of a surprise, considering he was a mere eighth in the preliminary, while Johannes dove well throughout both rounds (second in the preliminary) to keep himself on the podium in the end.

The boy's performed five dives in the final. Kuznetsov chose all dives with degrees of difficulty (DD) between 3.4 and 3.5. Technically, his strongest dive was his fourth, a reverse 3 ½ somersault tuck (DD 3.5), for which he received mostly marks of 8.5 and even a 9.0 from Judge 1. He performed well overall, and his only weak point was his third dive, a back 3 ½ somersault tuck (DD 3.4), which left him with his lowest marks by far, ranging from 4.5 to 6.5.

Meanwhile, Xu trailed behind fighting for silver with Johannes and Mezhenkiy. He gained ground as the competition progressed, and it was his final two dives that gave him the edge. He faltered temporarily on his third dive (inward 3 ½ somersault tuck), which generated marks as low as 5.0, but for his last dive, a reverse 2 1/5 somersault 1 ½ twists pike (DD 3.5), he earned all marks between 7.5 and 8.5, putting himself ahead of his opponents.

The consistency of Johannes allowed the host German team to celebrate its first medal in front of a home audience. His performance in the final included a nice forward 3 ½ somersault, which, despite its relatively low DD of 2.8, gave him marks of 8.0 and 8.5 across the board. His choice of dives overall were not as challenging as the other medallists, but aside from his first dive (for which he received a 6.0 from Judge 2), he competed at a level worthy of his top -3 result.

In total, 37 boys from 24 different countries competed in the preliminary of this event, of which 13 advanced to the final.

The next finals to be contested (on Wednesday, September 17) are the boy's 'B' 1m springboard and the girl's 'A' 3m springboard.

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Opening Ceremony of the 17th FINA Junior Diving World Championships
