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Synchro, Day 6: Russia wins, Spain "reborn" with silver in team free

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The Russians extended their unbeaten streak in synchronised swimming at World Championships, clinching the team free title with a total 97.400 at Barcelona's Palau Sant Jordi this evening. The synchro powerhouse staged a dramatic performance, unveiling a brand-new free programme, which incorporated intricate legwork of unmatched precision and sky-high lifts fully mastered. Team Russia celebrated their 15-year reign in this event, totalling a record eight successive crowns. The brilliant score was reflective of the extraordinary style and athleticism that was on display by the eight Russian swimmers.

Spain's excellent performance set to the theme of "Samsara", which means "continuous flow" or reincarnation in Tibetan, earned a total 94.230 points. In their glittering red swimsuits, the local squad presented a new artistic programme, which combined movements of great difficulty, and thrilled the home crowd with spectacular throws. With this silver, the home team bags their sixth medal at these World Championships (2 silver and 4 bronze).

Not far and rounding out the podium was team Ukraine, whose vibrant, Indian-inspired routine received an overall 93.640 points. Their radiant performance was marked by original figures, physical strength and a clear sense of elegance, for a free programme that definitely added value to the race for top honours.

Ukraine finished sixth in the event in Shanghai. Appearing in the world top-10 since 2003, Europe's number 3 continued rising ever-higher in the ranks of the world's top synchro teams, picking up their second bronze at these World Championships.

In doing so, Ukraine entered the small club of countries that have medalled in the event: USA, Canada and Japan, which dominated the podium from the first world edition in 1973 until 1991, Russia (12 titles including free and technical), Spain (first podium in 2005) and most recently, China in 2009.

Just out of medal range was team Japan, while Italy and Canada placed fifth and sixth, respectively.

QUOTES:

Gold medal team: Russia

6-time World champion Svetlana Kolesnichenko, on performance: “We are a new team, four of our teammates retired after the 2012 London Olympics. We did a good performance, we performed well all the lifts and elements and our result is the highest-ever achieved for this routine so our coach [Tatiana Pokrovskaia] was very happy.”

Silver medal team: Spain

Thais Henriquez: “I have spent eight years on the Spanish team, I am the veteran swimmer on the team and I’ve seen it evolved a lot since then. We developed our skills, our strength but I think originality remains our main mark.”

“I had only two months to train for this routine. I was out of training due to surgery.”

Coach Mayuko Fujiki, on routine: “For this routine, we wanted to go for something a little deeper than what had been seen before in synchro. We’ve had two of our team members having a difficult situation with their families and we wanted to feel close to them. That’s why we chose the concept of reincarnation, originated from Indian and other Asian cultures.”

Bronze medal team: Ukraine

Kateryna Sadurska: “We are very satisfied with our performance, our lifts were good and we think the audience enjoyed it.”
