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WORLD TROPHY Day 3: ?Cats? of Spain better than Chinese ?swans?

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Spain has confirmed its victory in the 3rd FINA Synchronised Swimming World Trophy, held in Madrid (ESP) from December 5-7, 2008. On the third and final day of competition, the Spanish swimmers won the free combination event, getting 99.000 from the judges including a perfect 10 for their presentation based on the theme 'Cats'. Wearing a special cap with two 'ears', their faces painted with cat characteristics and wearing a swimsuit that covered one leg of the competitors, the Spaniards finished the World Trophy with a fourth triumph out of four events (Duet Free, Duet Thematic, Team Free and Free Combination). In the overall ranking, the Iberians totalled 396.666 (out of a theoretical 400.000) and proved they have the conditions to be, in 2009, number 1 in this discipline.

But the Spanish 'cats' had a strong opposition from the Chinese 'swans'. Performing a routine based on these birds – out of the ten competitors of the programme, nine were wearing white swimsuits, while one was in black – China enchanted spectators and judges (also one 10) with this magnificent performance. Mixing classical music with a rare sense of elegance and original figures, the Chinese got 98.667 for their programme, very close to Spain's first position. The bronze medallists from the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing are constantly surprising the followers of this discipline, appearing each time with a more sophisticated (and complicated) programme. They were silver medallists in every event of the World Trophy, so they naturally finished in second of the overall ranking.

Also very beautiful was the Russian programme. With a new team, the European squad has still not entered into the trend of extreme originality proposed by some countries in this World Trophy, but the precision and elegance of its swimmers continues to amaze, taking into account the lack of international experience for this group of competitors. Getting one 10, the Russian routine got the bronze, confirming also their third overall position in this World Trophy.

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ITA Team

At risk of losing fourth place in the general classification was the team of Japan. Despite a very original programme, in which they threw flowers to the crowd from the starting platform, the Japanese swimmers did not convince the judges as much, who gave them a total of 95.000 – the Asian team shared the fifth place with Canada. As the advance of Japan was big enough after the second day, the overall ranking saw the Asian athletes getting the fourth position (381.667), slightly in front of Canada (380.668).

Italy had a great programme in the Free Combination event, performing a theme on Africa. With their faces painted in black, the Europeans displayed a very solid routine, plenty of acrobatic moves – the Free Combination is, in this aspect, often more spectacular than the team event, as there are two athletes more to support the lifts and throws. With 95.666, they were the fourth best of the last day, but could not recover from the ‘delay’ in the previous days – Italy finished in sixth of the overall ranking, but gave excellent indications on what we can expect for this team in 2009, a year marked by the FINA World Championships precisely in Rome (ITA).

Great Britain and Egypt closed the ranking, with the British athletes showing a mark of originality by initiating their programme with nine swimmers in the water and one in the starting platform. At the end, Great Britain was seventh of the World Trophy (355.333) and Egypt eighth (329.667).

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JPN Team

As an overall impression, this 3rd FINA Synchronised Swimming World Trophy brought an important new trend that can be explored in this discipline, namely the possibility for the athletes of performing with accessories, both in the starting platform and in the water. This possibility opens the door to new images and sensations in this already very attractive sport for TV and spectators. Moreover, it is obvious that most of the countries strongly adhere to this new philosophy, preparing in consequence very appealing routines, in which the technique is accompanied by a show of the athletes in the pool.

RESULTS

Free Combination

1. Spain 99.000

2. China 98.666

Xiao Huan Zhang, Beibei Gu, Na Wang, Ou Liu, Xi Luo, Xue Chen Huang, Yi Wen Wu, Xin Shi, Wen Yan Sun, Lu Chen

3. Russia 97.334

Aleksandra Patskevich, Daria Korobova, Ekaterina Zozulina, Aleksandra Elchinova, Daria Magan, Svetlana Ponkratova,

Victoria Shestakovich, Ekaterina Pakhomova, Alla Shiskina, Anastasia Zozulina

4. Italy 95.666

Alessia Bigi, Costanza Fiorentini, Elisa Bozzo, Francesca Gangemi, Manila Flamini, Mariangela Perrupato, Sara Sgarzi,

Benedetta Re, Dalila Schiesaro, Giulia Lapi

5. Japan 95.000

Yumi Adachi, Chisa Kobayashi, Erina Suzuki, Yukako Kobayashi, Saya Kimura, Maya Kimura, Saki Iida, Mariko Sakai,

Yumiko Ishiguro, Yukiko Inui

5. Canada 95.000

Marie-Pier Boudreau Gagnon, Chloe Isaac, Tracy Little, Elise Marcotte, Alison McKenny, Jo Annie Fortin, Valerie Welsh,

Karine Thomas, Eve Lamoureaux, Camille Bowness

7. Great Britain 89.666

Olivia Allison, Katrina Dawkins, Helen Morris, Asha Randall, Jenna Randall, Katherine Skelton, Jazmine Stanburry,

Louise Woolley, Victoria Lucas, Lauren Smith

8. Egypt 84.000

