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Diving World Cup: Jamaica makes history in American's podium

Eliana Alves, FINA Media Committee Member

The surprise was complete on Monday February 22, at the Maria Lenk Aquatic Centre in Rio de Janeiro (BRA), where is currently taking place the FINA Diving World Cup, as the final of the night – the men's 3m springboard – gave the gold medal to Mexican Rommel Pacheco (competing under the FINA flag), the silver went to Jamaican Yona Knight-Wisdom and the American Kristin Ipsen.



Knight-Wisdom (JAM) ©Buda Mendes/Getty Images

Chinese He Chao, gold medallist at the FINA World Championships in Kazan (RUS), ranked sixth.

Pacheco gathered 504.40 points and led most of the rounds. It was his first gold medal in a FINA World Cup.

“It was my first gold medal in a FINA competition. I used to compete in platform and I changed for springboard and passed for an adaptation. I’m very happy about this moment” said Pacheco.

Knight-Wisdom had an amazing growth. He finished the first round in sixth and passed to fifth, two rounds in third position and the last two dives in second position, with 459.25 points. In fact, his trajectory was growing since the beginning, when he passed to the semi-final being the 17th (397.90) to 11th (427.40) for the decision.

Knight-Wisdom of Jamaica, 20, made history in the men’s 3m individual event, with the first ever Jamaican diver to qualify for the Olympics. Son of a Jamaican father and a Barbadian mother, he was born in Great Britain.

“I’ve got my spot and these will be my first Olympic Games! I’ll be the first ever male diver from Jamaica. There was a female diver in 1972, a long time ago. As my father is Jamaican and my mother is Barbadian, my option was to choose between one of those two. After making sure that I wouldn’t upset either side of the family, I choose Jamaica and I’ve been representing the country since 2012”.



Knight-Wisdom (JAM) ©Buda Mendes/Getty Images

The competition also included more experienced divers who confirmed their dominance. Italian Tania Cagnotto won the 3m springboard preliminary with 348.65 points and managed to stop World number one, Shi Tingmao (CHN), who ended up second (344).

Cagnotto, 30, has yet to reach the podium at the Olympic Games, but she came close by finishing fourth in two events at the London 2012 Games. Cagnotto has one gold, two silver and six bronze medals in the FINA World Championships history.

Shi Tingmao, 24, twice gold medallist at the FINA World Championships in Kazan in individual and synchro 3m springboard – will fight against her compatriot, He Zi, who finished third in the prelims (342.00).

In the semi-final, on Tuesday, another experienced athlete will compete. Brazilian Juliana Veloso, the oldest diver in the competition (35 years-old). Veloso achieved the ninth place (315.50) after the prelims and, like Tania Cagnotto, she is going for her fifth Olympic Games: Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012 and now Rio 2016.

On the penultimate day of competition in Rio, the men will compete in the 10m platform and the women in the 3m springboard semi-final and final.
