

Spain, Italy and France lead the duet event in Rio

Eliana Alves, FINA Media Committee Member in Brazil

With a strong routine called "Passion Gipsy", that merges an influence of "Concierto de Aranjuez in Paco de Lucia" and "Passion Gitana" by Joaquin Cortez, Ona Carbonell and Gemma Mengual (ESP) won the duet event today at the FINA Synchronised Swimming Olympic Games Qualification Tournament in Rio de Janeiro, where the event doubles up as a test event for the Olympic Games.

Swimming at Maria Lenk Aquatic Centre, the venue dedicated to synchronised swimming and diving during the Games, the Spanish duet, Gemma Mengual and Ona Carbonell, scored 181.7816 points, 5.7815 points ahead of the second place that was attributed to Italy's Constanza Ferro and Linda Cerruti, who finished with 176.000 points.



Spanish duet ©Giorgio Scala

“I am very pleased with the classification. We are already Olympic medallists and we crave for the gold, but we know that facing Russia will be very difficult. But in fact, happiness will be enormous if we are on the Olympic podium. Our choreography for the Games will be the one we performed today, it's about Flamenco. We learned to dance the style and enjoyed being part of the Spanish tradition” Carbonell said.

Despite the synchronised swimming committee of FINA, it is difficult to anticipate anything before the end of the team and second round the the duet events on Sunday (March 6) which will be the last day of competition.

However, some of the 27 duets taking part in this competition are very well positioned for Rio's Olympic Games and can already celebrate.



Day 2 podium (ESP, ITA, FRA) ©Giorgio Scala

Today, the top duets maintained their classification established on Day 1: Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Mexico, Austria and the USA.

The changes were in the positions below, like the fall of Kazakhstan from 8th to 10th rank or Uzbekistan who jumped from 21st to 18th.

France, the third place with Laura Auge and Margaux Chretien, scored 172.1965 points expressing their vision of Africa in a routine full of African Music and references to this continent.

"It is about bright colours, about rhythms and there are a lot of connections to Brazilian music in our technical routine" said Chretien.

Greece, Mexico (competing under the FINA flag) and Austria were respectively fourth, fifth and sixth.



Austrian duet ©Giorgio Scala / Deepbluemia

18-year-old sisters Anna-Maria and Eirini Alexandri (with their triplet Vasiliki Alexandri as a reserve) were the great surprise of the competition representing Austria. The trio confirmed for the first time in Rio their talent already noticed at the European Games in Baku last year where they grabbed the title.

“We are very excited to go to our first Olympics and we love the city. It is nice, and the food is great, especially fruits, like mango” said one of the sisters.



The duet from Greece ©Giorgio Scala / Deepbluemia
