

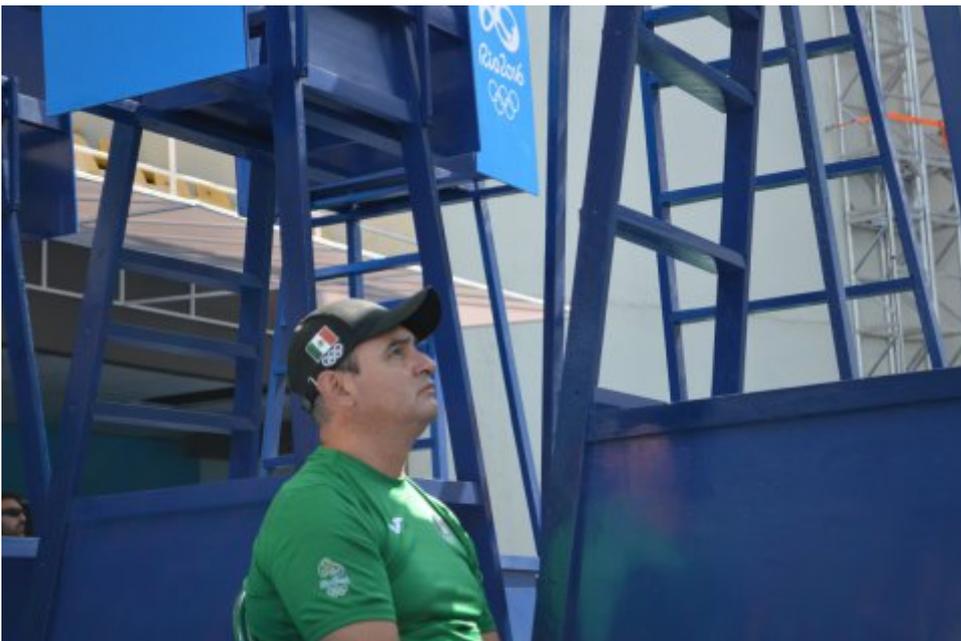
Rio 2016 – Mexico hopes to revalidate London 2012 success

FINA Communication Department

Mexico's diving coach Ivan Bautista Vargas sat down with us on the eve of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and run through the team's objectives and expectations.

Training was well and truly undergo when Coach Vargas, attentively looking at his divers repeatedly run up the stairs and jump, proudly said to us *"Mexico is one of the best teams in Rio, this is for sure!"*

"I mean, it is difficult to project what is going to happen, because everything is possible really. You never know until the end" said Vargas, underlining the recent improvement of the general level in the sport of diving not only in Mexico but across other nations such as Great Britain.



Mexican coach Ivan Bautista Vargas

"The field is very competitive here in Rio. China has been very consistent in the past years and they have a great system."

The Mexicans, always looking up at Team China, are working with a Chinese coach, Ma Jin, who brings best practice to the team and has largely contributed to the success of the Latin Americans in the recent years. She has been working hard especially with Rommel Pacheco and Paola Espinosa.

The divers have nicknamed her the "*Chinese mother*" and the "*diving queen*".

“She joined us 9 years ago now and brought her expertise from China. She is a great element and we are very grateful for her help” added Vargas.

Pair Rommel Pacheco and Jahir O Campo, who excelled at the FINA Diving World Cup in Rio last February, have entered for the 3m synchro event again.

“They both still have in mind the great memories from the World Cup so they have good sensations in Maria Lenk. They did really well a few months ago!”

Other strong components of the Mexican squad are Paola Espinosa, the 10m platform ace, with her London 2012 medal, she is one of the most experienced divers in the team and can execute very complicated dives, and Ivan Garcia, also performing in the platform event.

“We have very high expectations for Ivan and Paola!”

As for German Sanchez, the young man is apparently mentally prepared and ready to compete and almost fully recovered after his shoulder injury. His coach is positive and convinced he will perform his best in Rio.

“Physical and mental forms are both equally important, so we work on those two aspects a lot.”

Asked about the secrets and tips for diving success, Mr. Vargas mentioned the training camps he runs all year around and the hard work provided by the athletes.



The coach with his young team

“We also have a very promising junior team, which did well at recent international meets. Actually they are accompanying us in Rio and some of them will take part in the competition as well. Currently, we watch out for

Rodrigo Diego, Youth Olympic medallist in individual 3m springboard, Dolores Hernandez (19 years old, 3m springboard) and Michel Hernandez (18 years old, not taking part in the Rio Games).”

For the Mexican coach it is important to count on the grassroots athletes and he mentioned that Mexico will definitely have a next generation of great divers moving forward.

Asked the plans after Rio, coach Vargas said that the top priority at the moment is at least two medals in Rio, to at least repeat London 2012 success.
