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Adriana Jimenez: a new diving star from Mexico

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“After a very difficult year of 2016, where I had several injuries and operations, including a broken nose, I said to myself that I could not live the same situation again”, a relieved Adriana Jimenez admitted following her victory at the 2017 FINA High Diving World Cup in Abu Dhabi (UAE). After being congratulated by all other divers, the 32-year-old Mexican star took some minutes to reflect on the changes that occurred in the last months, leading to this unprecedented win at world level.

“I had to work a lot mentally, but it paid off. I had to get more focused on what I am doing and more concentrated once I am there, at the edge of the 20m-platform. Three months ago, I also changed coach (his name is Cesar Cuevas), and this was also highly positive”, confesses Jimenez, who concluded her four-dive performance in the capital of the United Arab Emirates with a total of 316.45 points. “With Cesar, we have worked out many of the mistakes I was doing in the past, namely the Barani (the half somersault to perform the feet-first entry) and the entry in the water. I believe I am much better on these two aspects now”.

Initially a pool diver (she began in the sport at 8), Jimenez could not make the Mexican team at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens (GRE) and took a big break until 2014, when she decided to embrace high diving. “It was a correct choice. I am now fully happy with what I am doing and this gold medal will certainly bring additional motivation”, she says.

Training in Mexico City, at the National High Performance Centre, the Mexican diver wakes up at around 6.30 every morning. “I never leave home without breakfast. I then go to the Centre and I train about 3.5/4 hours a day. It can be in the gym, it can be dryland work, and of course diving from the 10m-platform, the highest available board there”. The transition between 10m and 20m is in fact possible by “breaking” the dive in three parts: the take-off, the flight and the entry in the water. “Then, when there is a 20m-platform competition, I gather all these aspects in a single dive. At the edge of the board, I always have two basic points in my mind: leave strong and enter perfectly in the water”, she explains.



Adriana Jimenez (MEX) in action - Photo by Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

In a country with a huge tradition in pool diving – several Mexicans got medals at Olympic level -, high diving is developing fast and Jimenez is thankful to the support she receives from the local authorities. “Both the National Sport Council and the Olympic Committee are recognising this discipline and helping the athletes, but a higher public recognition could come if High Diving is an Olympic sport. This would change everything”, she admits. However, the Mexican gold medallist already admits that since her arrival to the circuit in 2014, “things have changed a lot in the women’s field: there are more twists and somersaults, the level is definitively higher”.

Concerning the expectation for the upcoming FINA World Championships in Budapest (HUN, July 14-30), Jimenez is cautious: “I think in one competition at the time. My aim is to enjoy all this, to perform well each of my dives, in a regular and consistent way”.

Before this triumph in Abu Dhabi, the best ranking for the Mexican star had been two fourth places in 2015, firstly at the World Cup in Cozumel (MEX) and then at the FINA World Championships in Kazan (RUS). Before running to the athletes’ lounge, she concludes in a philosophical way: “High Diving, and sport in general, is an example of tolerance. We gather athletes from different countries and different cultures, and we are like a family, we create solid links and I believe we can be the promoters of more peace in the world”.
