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FINA Best Male High Diver 2017: Steve LoBue (USA)



At 43 and still competing, Colombia's Duque is "the" reference in the sport, a model for all those still competing with him at the highest level. Hunt is known for pushing the boundaries of the difficulty of his dives and tried a very complex combination at the Budapest Worlds, which went wrong, plunging the Briton to fifth place. LoBue, by contrast, performed each of his four dives consistently.

“A bit of a roller coaster”

Winning in Budapest with a total of 397.15 points, Lo Bue is full of praise for this annual recognition from FINA.

“For me, it’s the absolute pinnacle of success in our sport at the moment. To be considered the Best High Diver of the Year

by FINA is an amazing accomplishment,” he says.

A New Jersey native but residing in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, LoBue is married and the happy father of a baby girl. With a physique suited to gymnastics – 1.61m/5ft4ins; 62kg/137pounds – the world title was his first gold in a FINA competition after three podium presences at the FINA World Cup: silver in 2017 and bronze in 2014 and 2015. The four dives on his trajectory to the top step of the podium in Budapest (right in front of the beautiful Magyar Parliament) began with a DD-limited reverse 2 somersaults with 2 twists (70.00 points) and continued with a front 5 somersaults with ½ twist (114.75

points). The third combination was a successful inward 3 somersaults with ½ twist (99.00 points), followed by his *grand*

finale inward 5 somersaults with ½ twist, worth 113.40 points.

How would you describe your season?

I would say my overall season has been a bit of a roller coaster. My results weren't as consistent as I would like, so the highs were high and when it rained it poured!

Besides your victory in Budapest, what is the strongest image you retain from the World Championships in

Hungary?

Budapest is an amazingly beautiful city. I would say the strongest images in my mind are looking out from the 27-metre platform and soaking in the beautiful sights from a viewpoint that not many people get to experience.

Talent and passion

Do you follow other aquatic sports? Do you look forward to meeting FINA stars from the five other aquatic

One of my favourite parts about World Championships is watching other athletes in action. It's truly an honour to be among the best athletes in the world and surrounded by so much talent and passion.

What are your plans for 2018?

I'm very happy with my routine at the moment, so I don't see any big changes coming up. I think the biggest thing I need to work on is consistency. I'm looking forward to training hard in the off-season to make sure I'm as prepared as possible for the 2018 season.

What has changed in high diving since its inclusion in the FINA programme?

The sport of high diving has progressed exponentially since its inclusion in 2013. We are seeing much more difficult dives and a much wider range of athletes that are capable of winning on any given day. It's truly exciting to watch the sport grow as we continue to make a push for an Olympic bid.

Ultimate test

To whom would you dedicate this award?

First and foremost, this award would not be possible without the love and support of my beautiful wife Lindsay. Her support is monumental to my success in and out of the water. Also, to my parents who have been encouraging and supportive since the age of seven when I started diving. I also truly believe that behind every great athlete is a great team of coaches, strength trainers, sponsors, and team-mates without whom success would not be possible. Thank you to my Red Bull family and everyone else involved.

Imagine I know nothing about high diving. How would you describe this discipline and the feelings associated with it?

High diving is the ultimate test of mental strength and athletic ability. It's a sport where athletes openly admit and display fear as they constantly battle the limitations of their own minds. Pure passion combined with excitement and an electric, dynamic environment make high diving a sport that only a select few in the world are capable of.
