

ASWS in Tashkent, Day 2: Uzbekistan and Mexico keep on rocking

Olga Kamardina, FINA correspondent in Uzbekistan

A highly lively Competition Day 2 of the FINA World Series final stop in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, played out 4 sets of medals in solo, mixed duets and team routines. Highlights was a sequel of Uzbekistan vs. Slovakia competition duel, Mixed Duets crowned their last champions of the season, and Solo Technical once again proved Mexican reigned supreme.

Read on to learn how the events unfolded.

HIGHLIGHT



Yesterday, Team Technical kicked off the “all team contest” between Uzbekistan and Slovakia. Round #1 gave preference to the hosts, which were top-motivated and highly touched by the win, and proceeded to excel in the Women Team Highlight, booking for them another gold medal.

Merry and stylish was Glenn Miller's "Recover" story, which team Uzbekistan expressively narrated to the public. Some of the crowd-pleasing parts featured soloist Khonzodakhon Tashkhudjaeva, the Uzbek princess, diving out of the water, backed by Anna Eltisheva, teaming Anastasiya Morozova in Women Duets event. Missing one of the acrobatic elements could be one of the reasons for the low total the team assumed, but, anyway, Uzbeki girls were very very lucky to have 5 of them in the list, instead of "compulsory" 4. Registering 75.3667 at home, they lost to themselves comparing to the previous gold swim in Beijing by some 4 points, 79.1333.

"FINA Artistic Swimming World Series is a great competition, and we took our chances to practice and learn from the best teams, - said Uzbekistan coach Oksana Bortnikova. – Experience is the best practice, and in course of the ASWS season we have managed to improve our skills. 2 gold and 2 silver medals is a good achievement for our young team, which now will be looking forward to the FINA World Junior Artistic Swimming Championships in Budapest and Asian Games later this summer".

Slovakia pocketed silver, finishing a 1.200 points behind the winners. They brought to Tashkent a high-energy "Ring, Ring, Ringa" program to the "Slumdog Millionaire" soundtrack. It had helped them to capture a full set of medals earlier in the circuit, but here it was again only silver, 74.3667.

Slovakian coach Gabor Szauder got to terms with the performance his team gave, and not to the color of the medal they earned.

"The girls had the right mood, they were very emotional and expressive, they did an excellent job, and I am pretty happy with their swim, - he explained. - We had higher lifts, swam more dynamically, performed all artistic and acrobatic compulsory elements, something which our opponents missed. I feel like it was not a silver routine".



Team Slovakia celebrates another silver in Highlight

Summary of the season: Ukraine set pace in all legs when they competed and pocketed 4 gold. Their season-best was registered in Budapest on Leg #5, 93.1332. Thanks to the successful home swim, Uzbekistan finished on 2 titles and 2 silver, like the team of France, as Slovakia collected a full set of medals

with a doubled silver. Overall, there were 6 nation awarded in course of the season, including Israel (1 silver, 1 bronze) and Japan (1 silver).

SOLO TECHNICAL

Mexican Joana Betzabe Jiménez García predictably dominated the Solo Technical session. Charms, artistic talent and flexibility singled her out at the very first look at the “Dream on” Aerosmith program. The business school student was not only pretty, but victorious. There was something in the manner of her walk, in the signature deckwork moves and in her choreography. Judges were short of accessing her accordingly on the artistic impression, as well as on her innovative elements. Totalling 82.5333 points Joana Betzabe deservedly landed gold, defeating Mariene Bojer of Germany, 78.4743 with her “Survivor” dance, and Slovakian Nada Daabousova, narrating a sin story of the “Hidden citizen”, 77.0221. There was actually another German in the competition, who posted a third day-high on her Nirvana swim. Michelle Zimmer collected 77.2741 but was out of the awardees due to the rule, foreseeing only one swimmer per country on the podium.



Joana Betzabe Jimenez Garcia of Mexico shows her winning mood

Again, the common thread running through the flash quotes was low scoring.

“Maybe the referees did not see my innovative elements, but I had them all, - exclaimed Joana Betzabe Jimenez Garcia of Mexico. – I know, I am not perfect, I still have to work much to make my program shining bright, but I the total does not fit it”.

In fact, Mexican’s gold in Tashkent turned out to be her second Solo Technical win in the circuit to match her 3 other golds of the Syros Island. Even though being unhappy about some aspects, she kept on smiling – the feature, which makes her one of the most recognizable artistic swimmers ever.

“You know, I am Mexican. In Mexico we always do a lot of smiling, - she commented. – When I am in the water, it comes naturally within as well whatever hard efforts I put to perform this or that element, I always want to share my good mood with the public”.

“I am pretty satisfied with the way Nada swam today, - said head coach Gabor Szauder of Slovakia. - Maybe

she needs some more power for the last 10 seconds, and that would help to improve scoring, but all in all, it was the best her performance this year.

“The first half of my routine was pretty good, while in the second one I was not that high, not that perfect, - noted Mariene Bojer on winning silver. – Swimming to “Survivor” soundtrack, I was to express the power of a woman. I think, I have coped with this task, because silver is reflecting my power. It is a good achievement for me to come along with the piece I earned yesterday in the Technical Duets”.

Summary of the season:

The best scores fall on Leg #5 in Budapest as Russian Varavara Subbotina posted a season-high 94.1509 points. Yukiko Inui of Japan, 2 time Olympic and 6-time world bronze medalist, topped the ranking twice, in Tokyo and in Surrey. Elyzaveta Yakhno of Ukraine was the most frequent swimmer on the podium, winning 4 pieces (1 gold, 3 silver), alongside Linda Cerruti of Italy with her full set of medals.

TEAM FREE

Less than 1 hour after the Highlight event was over, Uzbekistan and Slovakia went on their swimming marathone in team events.



Team Uzbekistan is getting ready for the swim

Asians opened the day hoping to take gold on their Free “Assassin-creed” portion. It bought them 2 bronze pieces earlier this season, so they knew they could complete on their mission successfully. Winged by the home crowd support, Uzbekistan had no major mistakes and accumulated 77.4000.

“It always gives us pleasure to swim in front of the public, but this time we were tired, - confessed Gulsanam Yuldasheva, one of the gold-winners. This is the second swim of the day, and it is amazing. This was not our best swim, as were top-scoring in Tokyo on Leg#3, 80.3000. As for me, the character of the music in Team Free is very complicated to act out. In Highlight we are supposed to express happiness and joy, here it is very different, all about concentration and strong will”.

Slovakia was again second and got 74,5333 on their “Man from U.N.C.L.E., which featured impressive legwork and holds, but never scored enough to reach the podium.

“Winning medal is always good, - said Kristina Kvasnovska of Slovakia. - The throws were all good, the patterns - close, and verticals - well done. I am very proud, that my girls proved themselves able to produce such a performance, and we are only juniors, aged 17 and younger. We had 2 routines per day, but this does not matter much. In Budapest we had 3 team routines per day, so we have been quite ready for such loads physically”.

Summary of the season: Ukraine sits on top with as many as 4 titles and 1 silver. Russians were not often seen competing in the circuit, but their rare chances showed the scores to beat – the absolute season-best of 97.0000 points on Leg 5 in Budapest. Japan, Spain, China, Mexico and Uzbekistan registered one gold each, and 10 more nations celebrated their appearance at the podium, including Uzbekistan, Canada, USA, Austria, Hungary, Israel, Belarus, France, Greece and Slovakia.

MIXED DUET FREE



Dinara Ibragimova and Vyechaslav Rudnev of Uzbekistan

Winged by their first ever medal in the Mixed Duet Technical on Competition Day 1 in Tashkent, Dinara Ibragimova/Vechyaslav Rudnev showed an emotional swim in the free portion. Their emotional story of Benjamin Clementine, called “Adios”, scored 70.6333 points (with 29.3333 on the artistic impression and 21.1000 on execution and 20.2000 on the difficulty). According to Dinara Ibragimova, who was the swimming coach of the duo and choreographer of the routine at the same time, their idea was to show various stages of relationships between a man and a woman.

“On the deck we quarreled, in the water we chased each other, parted, and made piece again, - explained the Uzbek's swimmer. – I think we were emotional enough and were a good example for the young generation of swimmers, who watched us. The youngest competitor today, representing Fergana, was just 11 years old”.

Showing their personal best of the year, Uzbeks were the only competitors in the Mixed Duets Free event.

Kazakhstan had to withdraw as their program was not cooked ready.

“Mixed duets have the bright future ahead of them, - commented Lisa Schot, FINA Technical Delegate and FINA Artistic Swimming Technical Committee Chairwoman. – They are in the program for Tokyo 2020, and this is one of the best motivation for the young make-swimmers to come to our sport”.

Summary of the season: The strongest challenge and the highest scores were registered in March in Paris, where Russian Maya Gurbanberdyeva partnering “FINA Best Male Artistic Swimmer 2017” Aleksandr Maltsev received 91.9333 on their free program. Italian Giorgio Minisini/Mariela Flamini won 3 gold and 1 silver pieces and together with the technical routine’s 4 titles, shall be sealed as the most decorated athletes in the circuit. They year of 2018 has improved on the geographical data for the FINA Artistic Swimming World Series in the mixed duets, featuring 8 nations at the podium in course of 10 legs.

The 2018 edition of the FINA Artistic Swimming World Series comes to a close on Sunday, July, 1. The ultimate Competition Day #3 will distribute 3 sets of medals in the free routines for Solo, Combination and Duets.

Competition results. FINA Artistic Swimming World Series 2018. Leg #10 Competition Day 2

Highlight

1. UZBEKISTAN (Eltisheva Anna, Khakimova Khurshida, Morozova Anastasiya, Onkez Diana, Ruzmetova Anastasiya, Thoshkhudjaeva Khonzodakhon, Tulkinova Mokhorakhon, Yuldasheva Gulsanam, Salieva Alina - R, Shomakhsudova Nigora - R) 75.3667
2. SLOVAKIA (Bacharova Julia, Bodikova Zuzana, Iakovlev Anastasia, Kvasnovska Kristina, Lisa Laura, Novotna Barbora, Slezakova Rebecca, Suranova Sophia, Miskechova Diana, Daabousova Nada) 74.1667

Team Free

1. UZBEKISTAN (Eltisheva Anna, Khakimova Khurshida, Morozova Anastasiya, Ruzmetova Anastasiya, Shomakhsudova Nigora, Thoshkhudjaeva Khonzodakhon, Tulkinova Mokhorakhon, Yuldasheva Gulsanam, Salieva Alina – R, Garusova Sofiya – R) 77.4000
2. SLOVAKIA (Bacharova Julia, Bodikova Zuzana, Iakovlev Anastasia, Kvasnovska Kristina, Lisa Laura, Novotna Barbora, Slezakova Rebecca, Suranova Sophia, Miskechova Diana – R, Lengyelova Diana – R) 74.5333
3. Andijan – UZB (Abdurashitova Robiya, Bozorova Begoyim, Mamatkazina Almira, Qobiljonova Ruxsora, Sadriddinova Iroda, Shaxbozova Moxidil, Toshboeva Moxidil, Toshboeva Odina, Zokirova Dilafuz, Alisherova Zebiniso – R) 62.9667

Solo Technical

1. Joanna Betzabe Jimenez Garcia (MEX) 82.5333
2. Bojer Marlene (GER) 78.4643
3. Daabousova Nada (SVK) 77.2741
4. Toshkhudjaeva Khonzodakhon (UZB) 73.6928

5. Damyanova Hristina (BUL) 73.6228
6. Zimmer Michelle (GER) 77.2741
7. Xayotova Sabriniso (Bukhara, UZB) 48.2711
8. Bozorova Begoyim (Andijan, UZB) 45.8406

Mixed Duets Free

1. Ibragimova Dinara/Rudnev Vyatcheslav (UZB) 70.6333
 2. Savelev Aleksey/Vayts Evita (Tashkent, UZB) 57.1000
 3. Ikramov Amir/Latipova Sevara (Samarkand, UZB) 52.2333
 4. Alimbekov Shokhrukh/Xakimova Risolat (Fergana, UZB) 40.8667
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