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YOG BA 2018: Colombia gets gold in an epic final

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In a very unpredictable final, Daniel Restrepo from Colombia, was the surprising winner of the men's 3m springboard final, the second event of the diving competition at the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires. Only sixth after the preliminaries, the 2018 junior world champion presented a programme with a total DD of 18.0 for five dives. The problem with difficult dives is that you have to execute them right to justify the option for a riskier presentation. The 18-year-old Colombian not only did them well, but he could also benefit from his main challengers' weak points.

After the morning session, Lian Junjie (CHN) was the leader in 573.10, and seemed the natural favourite for the victory. Until tonight's event, China had won all the individual finals at the previous two editions of the Youth Olympic Games, plus the women's 10m platform on the first day in the Argentinean capital. A total of nine wins without opposition was the outstanding roll of honour for the Asian delegation.



Anthony Harding (GBR)

Until Lian's first dive in today's final. Presenting a forward 2 ½ somersaults 2 twists (pike), the Chinese athlete lost the balance when jumping on the board and his feet touched the left side of it before the take-off. The entire flight section of the dive was affected and entry was of course catastrophic. The astonished crowd could not believe on the scoreboard display: 0 points. The idea of a medal vanished in that precise moment.

This hiccup made the final an open field for the remaining competitors. Second after the prelims, Anthony Harding (GBR) seemed in a good position to eventually win the gold, but he lacked one very important thing: risk. Higher Degree of Difficulty. Always very regular in his dives, his total of DD was 15.8, much less than Restrepo. This was the key for the outcome in today's final.

With a total of 559.50, Harding earned silver and recognised this weak point. "This was in fact what was missing. But it was an option done by my coach together with me. I have more difficult dives in my programme, but we haven't presented them here. However, I am very happy on the way this final unfolded. I was not expecting this outcome", confessed the 18-year-old.



Ruslan Ternovoi (RUS)

The bronze went to Ruslan Ternovoi (RUS), in 551.20. An excellent result for the European diver, who was ninth after the heats. His final dive was decisive for this successful outcome. Performing a reverse 1 ½ somersaults with 3 ½ twists (DD 3.5), he got marks from 8.0 to 8.5 for a total of 84.00.

Matthew Carter, from Australia, third after the morning competition, could not reach the podium, concluding in fourth. Also presenting a difficult programme, he had serious problems with a 109C (forward 4 ½ somersaults, tuck), a circumstance that definitively dictated his fate in the final.

“I wasn’t expected this result. Despite my world title, I didn’t think so much in the medal, but rather in improving my personal best. But, step by step, I managed to get there”, confessed the Colombian gold medallist.

“It’s true I had a very high DD, you risk a lot, but with good training and sacrifice, these dives become a routine, the body gets used to them, they become easier to perform”, he added. When asked if a new Colombian diving icon is born, after Orlando Duque (one of the most well-known high divers in the planet), Restrepo could not avoid a smile: “The world will know me. I hope the people will see me at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. I have to work a lot, but it’s one of my main goals. But if I don’t get there this time, there are still Paris 2024 and Los Angeles 2028”.



The men's 3m springboard podium

“Today, I wasn’t expecting the failure of my Chinese colleague. He missed the first dive, then succeeded in the rest of the competition. But I’ve also done well. I didn’t win because he failed, I performed myself very well”, he confessed. “I train in Medellin, where they support me a lot. In Colombia, however, we don’t have a venue like this – we have an outdoor pool, and the boards don’t have these conditions. We want the authorities to support us, and I hope my success will help on this”, he continued.

“I will surely have a lot of media attention in Colombia – I will do it, not just because I have to do it, but because I like to do it. I like to stress out that sport is the solution for many problems and for many challenges the youth is facing nowadays”, Restrepo concluded.
