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# DWS, London, Day 1: Great Britain and Australia snatch two golds destined for China

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The last leg of the FINA/CNSG Diving World Series kicked off on Friday 17 May in spectacular fashion as Thomas Daley and Matthew Lee didn't disappoint the home crowd with a showstopping performance in the men's 10m synchro platform, with Australia's Maddison Keeney and Anabelle Smith mirroring the feat in the final two rounds of their 3m synchro springboard final.

While both nations managed to overtake their Chinese rivals' early leads in those events, the women's 10m synchro and men's 3m synchro ended with China taking home the gold – though again not as expected in the latter as Russia threatened to make it a third upset in the final rounds.

## British delight

Already medal contenders coming into the competition ranked third, the first few rounds provided the expected charge of China followed by Russian Federation before the British pair overtook Viktor Minibaev and Aleksandr Bonidar in the third round with a 82.56 score for their inward 3 ½ somersault tuck.

Daley and Lee signalled their intent in the fourth by edging further ahead of Russia with their back 3 ½ somersault pike for 91.80 points, which they replicated in round five to exceed even their own expectations. They leapfrogged China's Yang Hao and Lian Junjie before holding their nerve to stay in front in the final dive with 104.34 points – one of the highest scores ever recorded in the men's synchro – for their forward 4 ½ tuck, sending the home spectators into a frenzy. Their golden 477.90 final score even eclipsed the British record of 444.45 points set by Daley and previous partner Daniel Goodfellow at the Rio 2016 Olympics.

Daley said of their feat: "When I was feeding my little boy Robbie this morning I didn't think that would happen. We knew that we were capable of doing that as we've been doing it in training but this is the first time everything has come together in one diving list. There's still more to get out of the list, but we're pretty happy with that."

“The home crowd support was just fantastic and being able to compete in front of family and friends and beat the Chinese gives you a lot of confidence, especially heading into the World Championships.”

Lee was similarly delighted with their success as he added: “I’ve never interacted with the crowd like that before, turning around with that much confidence and thinking, ‘we’ve smashed it’ and punching my fist in the air. I’m speechless. In the junior worlds I established myself as quite a successful athlete but this is my first senior international gold medal – I’m over the moon. We’ve still got a few more competitions to go here but it’s a great start.”

A clearly disappointed Yang and Lian conceded their early promise of gold with a score 459.00 to instead take home silver, while Minibaev and Bonidar finished their day with 448.50 and a bronze medal.

### Youngsters take first gold for China

Great Britain’s success of the day didn’t start there either as Lois Toulson and Eden Chen claimed bronze in the women’s 10m synchro final earlier in the session with a score of 284.76. China’s young pairing of Chen Yuxi and Yuan Haoyan proved unbeatable with their 334.92 points, even with a good attempt by DPR Korea’s Kim Mie Rae and Jo Jin Mi to keep up but eventually finishing with 327.24.

Despite the dominance of the 13-year-olds, they were not so happy with their performances after posting a lower score than the 338.70 they achieved in their senior debut last week in Kazan. “I didn’t think the score was very good,” said Yuan Haoyan. “I’m not used to this big environment but I will train hard to put myself in this kind of environment in the future.”



Chen Yuxi and Yuan Haoyan (CHN)

Chen Yuxi said: “I wasn’t very satisfied with my performance today. I had an injury to my right arm from training so I was struggling when I entered the water. We’re still at the early stage of our careers, so we will try to do our best every time.”

### Australia pile on the pressure

The women's 3m synchro springboard followed similar dramatics to the men's 10m synchro as Australia's Maddison Keeney and Anabelle Smith overtook leaders Lin Shan and Chang Yani to keep up the pressure on China going into the final round.

Once again China failed to pull back their early lead to settle for silver with 316.77 points to Australia's 323.70. It was another bronze in London for Canada's Jennifer Abel who scored 306.45 together with partner Melissa Citrini Beaulieu, after Abel repeated her London 2012 Olympic feat in the event.

Appearing surprisingly relaxed at their win, Smith said: "We weren't keeping tabs on the score, we just did our normal thing between each dive." Remembering the earlier exploits of the home nation also overturning China to take gold in the men's 10m synchro, Keeney added, "It's always good to beat the Chinese."

## **Final flourish**

The men's 3m synchro provided even more shocks to end an action-packed first day of London's leg of the Diving World Series, as China's Wu Luxian and Wang Zongyuan led from the off only to slip in the fourth round, this time to Russia. However, they managed to pull it back in the final dive to reach a 418.68 total points score to Russians Evgenii Kuznetsov and Nikita Shleikher's 417.12. Ukraine's Oleksandr Gorshkovozov and Oleg Kolodiy then managed a surprise podium place with 405.63 to claim bronze, after starting outside of the top three in the rankings and at the bottom of the table in the first two rounds of the final before hopping between silver and bronze position in their last four dives.

Gold medal winner Wu said of what turned out to be a very tense final: "We weren't paying too much attention to how the other divers were doing – we only focused on every one of our own dives. We always do the same, if anything goes wrong we encourage each other."

He also said of Team China losing their early leads and failing to claim gold in the men's 10 synchro and the women's 3m springboard: "If other people go wrong then they have their problems but we won't let it distract us."

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