

Divers praise Zhaoqing facility before World Cup action

Zhou Xin, FINA Media Committee member

As the first-ever permanent facility for high diving in the world, Zhaoqing High Diving Training Center is ready to welcome a total of 43 high divers from 18 countries to perform at the FINA High Diving World Cup 2019 on May 25-26.

High Diving, youngest aquatic discipline in FINA, has held five previous editions of the World Cup: 2014 (Kazan, RUS), 2015 (Cozumel, MEX), and in Abu Dhabi (UAE) in 2016 2017 and 2018.

The Zhaoqing High Diving Training Center, which was constructed by Chinese former diver Feng Yingxiong, is believed to set a milestone for the sport and attract more interest around the world.

"We want to express our deepest gratitude to China Swimming Association and to Zhaoqing for their tremendous support and to Mr. Yingxiong Feng who has taken the bold initiative of constructing this first-ever permanent high diving facility. The venue could not be better and will provide our athletes with the optimal conditions to perform to the very best of their ability over the next two days," said Dr Donald Rukare, FINA Bureau Liaison during the press conference held here on Friday.

Mitch Geller, on behalf of the FINA Technical High Diving Committee, considered: "I cannot express how thrilled we are to be here in the incredible Yingxiong Sports Centre. The large variety of platform heights available in this great pool and the tremendous dry land training facilities has provided optimal conditions for the athletes to prepare for this event. Because this is a permanent facility, many of the athletes competing here have already had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the venue. At this World Cup, many athletes will be attempting new dives and we will witness the most complex and difficult dives ever performed in competition."

For the divers, the Zhaoqing complex provides them stability and safety and builds up the new standard of the brave-heart sport.

"High diving is scary, wherever you do it. Sometimes we have to worry about the wind, big waves, strong currents and so on in normal temporary venues. But here, all of these worries are taking away from us. So we can just enjoy ourselves," admitted the three-time World Cup winner Gary Hunt from Great Britain.

"I came to Zhaoqing three times in the last six months and I feel very prepared for the World Cup. I could not train in 27m for six months during the winter but now it's easier in this facility. It makes a big difference," Hunt added.

Steve LoBue (USA), winner of the 2017 Budapest World Championships, spoke in Chinese for a while and said the safety is the top priority of the sport.

"Everybody wants to win, but the most and last important thing is the safety. We are happy to compete in this incredible facility which provide us more safety," LoBue confessed.

Rhiannan Iffland (AUS), defending champion of the World Cup and World Championships said: "We are expecting a very exciting competition this weekend."

Adriana Jimenez (MEX), winner of the 2017 World Cup, said: "We will try our best and enjoy the competition."
