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## HDWCup, Zhaoqing, Day 2: Hunt and Iffland continue their winning streak

Zhou Xin, FINA Media Committee Member

Three-time World Cup winner Gary Hunt of Great Britain enjoyed "home advantage" and celebrated his fourth title in a row while Rhiannan Iffland of Australia retained her crown at the FINA High Diving World Cup here at the Yingxiong Diving Center on Sunday.

Always favourite before the start of a high diving event, Hunt dominated the field all the way through his four dives in the two-day competition in China and collected a total of 436.70 points for his fourth consecutive World Cup title since 2016.



Photo by Gettymages

David Coltrani of the United States took the silver with 400.20 points and Constantin Popovici of Romania came third with 397.60 points.

"This is the third time I've come here for training at the Yingxiong permanent facility in six months. I feel like I had the home advantage. It was really a different climate today and really nice weather," Hunt said.

"I think that last round was something special. Unlike before, as the defending champion, I felt a lot of pressure on the last dive but I relied on my training, just focused on my breathing and managed to do what I needed to do," explained the British star, who combined high degree of difficulty and excellent execution and scored a day-high 145.60 points in his last dive, a 5268D (back 3 somersaults 4 twists).

For Constantin Popovici, who got injured on his right arm before the World Cup, he said he was happy with the bronze medal.

"I tried a new dive during the training after I arrived here but failed. I went to the hospital and took a day off just before the competition. I guess everybody here wished me not to compete, but I decided to go back to the 27-metre tower. I felt a little stiff this morning but my therapist helped me back on the right track. I decided to give up the new dive for today's competition, maybe next time when I am in better shape. I won a silver last year and this year a bronze. It is not bad in my situation as a new high diver," Popovici said.



Rhiannan Iffland (AUS) - Photo by Gettyimages

Defending champion Rhiannan Iffland seemed unstoppable as she grabbed 70.20 for her 5143D (forward 2 somersaults 1 1/2 twist) and 96.90 for her 5461C (inward 3 somersaults 1/2 twist) for a winning total 328.85. Jacqueline Valente of Brazil finished second in 309.75 thanks to her last dive, and pace-setter Adriana Jimenez of Mexico came third in 298.15. Lysanne Richard of Canada was 2.05 points behind.

"I could feel the pressure and all the eyes were on me, but I could manage it. The winning feeling is perfect and being the first champion of the permanent high dive venue is cool. It is a very special World Cup this time at Yingxiong centre. I hope I can come here for more training," Iffland said.

Jacqueline Valente kept kissing her silver medal and waving her fists to the sky. "It was my second-best performance! I want to say 'thank you China' and 'thank you the venue'. I enjoyed the feeling of flying, the deck and the platform," Valente said in tears.



Photo by Liang Liang

At the end of the competition, FINA awarded the Special Contribution Trophy to Mr. Feng Yingxiong who designed and constructed the permanent high diving venue.

A total of 43 divers from 18 federations competed at the Zhaoqing World Cup.

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