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ASWS, Barcelona, day 1: Russia, Ukraine and Spain win gold

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The eighth leg of the FINA Artistic Swimming World Series started this Friday in Barcelona and swimmers made the city of water enjoy of their abilities during the three events that completed the first day of competition: solo technical routine, duet technical routine and team technical routine.

Thirteen soloists competed for the gold medal in the first event of the day. Ona Carbonell's won with an impressive exercise, which also left a message of peace. Nelson Mandela's speech at Laureus World Sports Awards sounded during her routine and it was a great surprise for the fans.

On the way to her seventh World Championship, Ona Carbonell decided to "do something different". She has made a risky bet: it is unusual to choreograph a speech.

"Maybe when you are older, you are more daring and you do not have so many barriers", the Spanish swimmer, Olympic medalist in London 2012 with the duo and the team, reflected.

This risk is for her "a plus of motivation". "I think this is a perfect moment in my career to break barriers and to do different things. I have been suffering for many years this sport. I have also enjoyed many beautiful moments; now I'm trying to innovate and leave something", she explained.



From her will to "enjoy" came her new solo technical routine under Nelson Mandela's voice. The speech that he gave at the Laureus World Sports Awards in 2000 inspires the last routine of Ona Carbonell.

"It's my way of thanking him for what he did. He spoke about sport as an element that breaks down barriers. Sport can change the world because sport is beyond discrimination," she said.

Her swimsuit, white and with details in black, picks up a map. The five straps bear the Olympic colors. And in her head she made space for a white dove -created by Picasso- and an olive branch to reinforce her message of peace.

Ona Carbonell (Spain) took gold with a score of 90.0730. Marta Fiedina (Ukraine) and Kate Shortman (Great Britain) finished second and third of a total of thirteen swimmers.

The Duet Technical routine opened the afternoon session. Ukraine's Marta Fiedine formed an successful couple with Anastasiya Savchuk. They earned 91.0077 points and beat Spain's Sara Saldana and Paula Ramirez (86.8509). France took bronze with twins Charlotte Tremble and Laura Tremble (85.7457).



This event was really special for Chile's Isidora Letelier and Natalie Lubascher, who competed together as a duet in an international event for the first time.

"We know that we have potential and that make us be optimistic", Isidora Letelier said.

Mexico's Nuria Diosdado and Joana Jiménez made also their international debut.

"We had to get rid of that fear of the first competition together. As 'Joa' says, it is the first time that we swim together. The objective is to be in Tokyo, in the Olympic final, and this year we have the Pan-American Games. It is the most important competition for the country in 2019. So today it was important to remove the fear", Nuria Diosdado said.



In the final event of the evening, the Technical Team event, Russia emerged victorious. Alla Shishkina, Vlada Chigireva, Mariia Shurochkina, Marina Goliadkina, Veronika Kalinina, Polina Komar, Anastasiia Arkhipovskaia and Mayya Doroshko topped the podium in Barcelona. Their interpretation of the song Kadril guided them to the gold, with 95.3284 points.

Spain won the silver medal and the team from Mexico closed the podium.

"It is an honour to receive the best athletes of the artistic swimming here, at the Sant Jordi pool. I want to thank the institutions their collaboration. Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, Diputacion de Barcelona and Generalitat de Catalunya made possible that the FINA World Series came in Barcelona. And I would also thank everyone who is collaborating with the success of the event: judges, coaches, organization and volunteers. Without them the competition would not be possible", the presidente of the Catalan Swimming Federation, Enric Bertran, said.

"I am happy to see in the Sant Jordi Pool athletes from 26 countries and many clubs participating at the Spanish Open. I wish good luck to all them", he added.

The Sports Commissioner of Barcelona City Council, Marta Carranza, said: "Today is a great day for Barcelona. We bring to our city one of the most iconic events of artistic swimming, the FINA World Series, and it is a privilege".

- The programme for the next two days in Barcelona:

Saturday June 1

Free Solo
Highlights
Technical Mixed Duet
Free Combination

Free Duet
Free Mixed Duet
Free Team

Photos: Jordi Lopez / FCN
