

Published on [fina.org](https://www.fina.org) - Official FINA website (<https://www.fina.org>)

ASWS, Quebec City, Day 2: China 2 and Japan 1 gold medal

Maureen Croes, FINA Media Committee member

With the spectator stands filled to the max, the excitement continued in the Desjardins Aquatic Centre in Quebec City, Canada on the second day of the seventh leg of the 2019 FINA Artistic Swimming World Series. Three gold medals were up for grabs today and the competition was fierce. Starting with the Free Duet event in which 11 duets were showcasing their routines. Displaying the most convincing routine was the duet from China. Xuechen Huang and Wenyan Sun achieved 94.5667 for their “Goddess of Hope” routine swum to music by Mei Lin Mao.



Photo by Dan Robichaud

Huang and Sun were “extremely happy” with the scores, the two gold medals and thankful to the judges for “appreciating their performance and encouraging us”. “The inspiration for the routine is that our come back will bring new hope to the whole team.”

With a score of 92.9667, Yukiko Inui and Megumu Yoshida from Japan clinched the silver medal. Their “Time Leap” routine started of slow, building up to a climax with fast, intense and powerful movements. Closing out the podium were

hometown favourites, Jacqueline Simoneau & Claudia Holzner, achieving their best score in the ASWS for this routine: 90.1000.



Photo by Dan Robichaud

On the theme “Unity”, Holzner and Simoneau had the following to say: “Our original idea was to always be connected during the routine, so we are very close together. A lot of the choreography was made so that we are touching, which adds a lot of difficulty. There are a lot of moments under water that are back to back, so we are taking a chance by following and trusting each other. It requires a chemistry with your duet partner, that is what makes it so special.”

The creativity and the interpretation of themes of today’s duet routines was extraordinary. Obtaining personal best scores, the duet from the Netherlands, Noortje Brouwer and Bregje Brouwer, depicted a day in the life of a tribe, Korea’s Seoyeon Baek and Yemo Koo R Riyoung Lee were magical, while Singapore’s Debbie Soh & Miya Yong honoured their country’s symbol: a lion. Other personal best scores for their performance during the 2019 ASWS were achieved by Argentineans Camila Arregui and Trinida Lopez Brasesco, the pair from Colombia Monica Arango and Estefania Alvarez, and Germany’s Marlene Bojer and Daniela Reinhardt.

In the Free Mixed Duet event China’s Wentao Cheng and Haoyi Shi claimed the gold medal with an 84.1000. Swimming to the music “Legend of the Butterfly Lovers”, the pair depicted a beautiful love story in the water.

Asked about the popularity of Artistic Swimming for males in China: “It is becoming popular for all different ages. I have been practicing artistic swimming for five years now.”

Closing out the evening in Canada was the Free Team event. Cheered on by a large group of Chinese supporters but watched and admired by everyone, the Chinese team debuted a spectacular routine themed “Ode to the Heroines”. Using the pool as their battlefield, the team displayed elegance, grace, intensity and power. Their score, 95.3667, was well received and is currently the second highest score in the ASWS. Earning an 89.9333, Canada’s team added a silver medal to their previously won two gold and one silver medal in this event. Winning their first medal in this event, Hungary achieved 77.4333 for the bronze medal.



Photo by Dan Robichaud

The FINA Artistic Swimming World Series has added many opportunities for the athletes to compete throughout the year in preparation for the big championships of the season. Athletes and coaches seem to agree that the ASWS has been a positive addition and beneficial for their development and competitive experience.

Hungary's Head Coach Natalia Tarasova: "I think this World Series system is helping us to improve, to get confidence. They jump in the water now as if it is a training, they don't feel scared and afraid of the crowd and the judges. It is very helpful as a practice during the year, to prepare for the World Championships."

Canada's Jacqueline Simoneau: "There is nothing like a competition, you cannot recreate competition feeling in training. The more you compete, the more you learn, the more you make mistakes, but you learn from those mistakes. When it really counts, at the Pan-American Games or FINA World Championships we will be able to give our best out there."

The final session in Quebec City (CAN):

Saturday June 1

16:30 Solo Free

16:15 Combo

17:15 Highlight Team

18:30 Gala Exhibition
