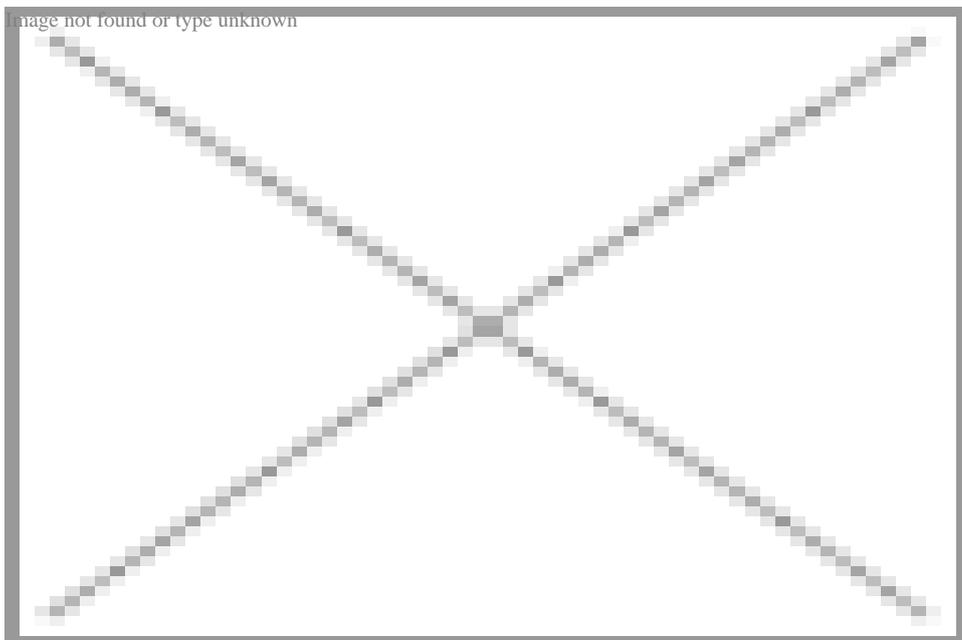


Artistic Swimming, Day 2: Favourite Kolesnichenko (RUS) claims gold

Maureen Croes & Anna Kozina, FINA Media Committee

The Artistic Swimming competition at FINA World Championships taking place in the Yeomju Gymnasium commenced with the finals for the Technical Solo event this evening in Gwangju, Korea. After yesterday's preliminary round which saw 28 soloists competing, the top twelve athletes qualified for tonight's final. Heavy favourite and reigning world champion Russia's Svetlana Kolesnichenko continued her dominance in the Artistic Swimming world by earning 95.0023 points to claim the gold medal.

Swimming to the song "Survivor", the theme song from the movie Lara Croft, Kolesnichenko's routine depicted the athletic female warrior popularised in the series. This is Svetlana's 14th World Championship gold medal, to which she may be adding as she will be competing in four more events this week in Gwangju.



Ona Carbonell (ESP) - Photo by gettyimages

After the preliminary round, it was obvious that the fight for the silver and bronze medal would be intense, coming down to whomever executed their routine as close to perfection as possible. Spain's Ona Carbonell, Japan's Yukiko Inui, Ukraine's Marta Fiedina and Canada's Jacqueline Simoneau were all in the mix for a spot on the podium.

Veteran Ona Carbonell, competing at her seventh World Championship, and owner of 20 World Championship medals as well as two Olympic medals, swam her creative and gutsy routine to the voice of Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela. As one of the most decorated athletes in Artistic Swimming, Carbonell, donning a gorgeous white bathing suit portraying goodness, light and peace, expressed how powerful sports can be in the quest to make the world a better place. Her message was well received by the judges and the spectators earning 92.5002 points for the silver medal, her 21st World Championship award.

Ona has a busy schedule here in Gwangju as she is set to compete in six more events.

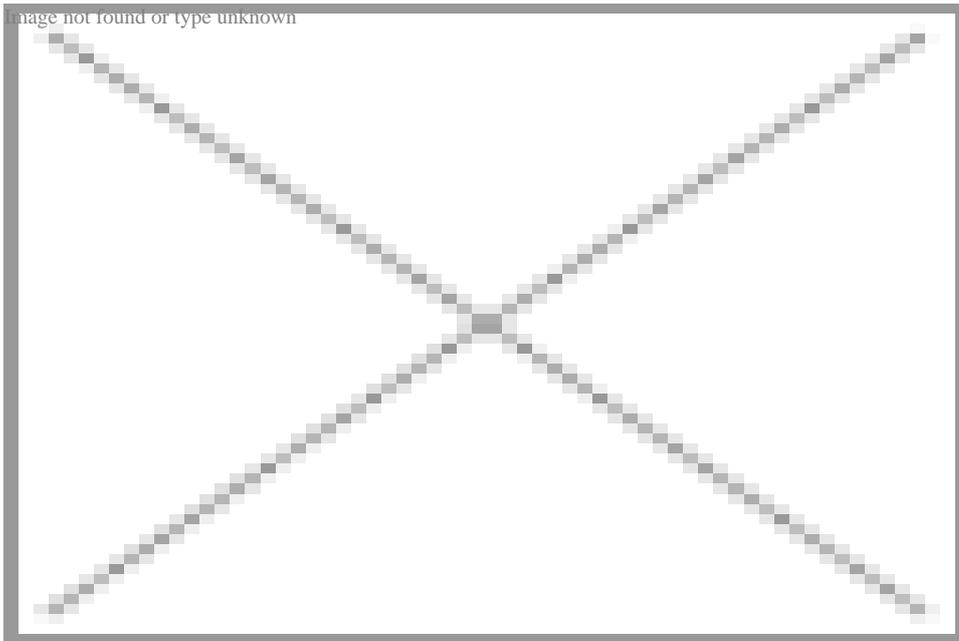
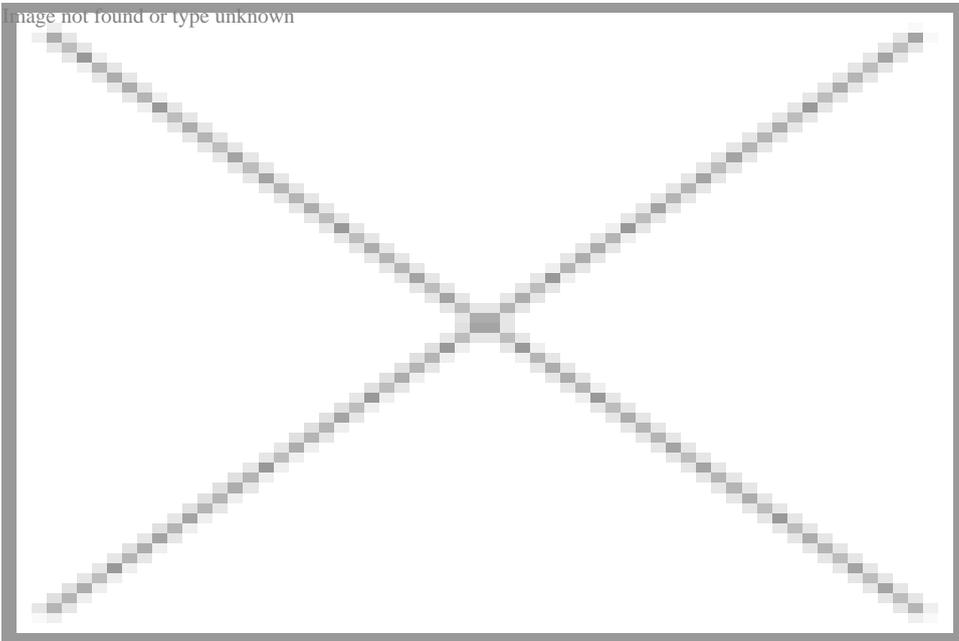


Photo by gettyimages

Although Japan's Yukiko Inui has been on the podium six times at previous World Championships (Kazan, 2015 and Budapest, 2017), she has yet to win a medal in a Solo event. Determined to change the statistics, Yukiko, performing her "Miracle Star" themed routine, claimed the bronze medal with a score of 92.3084. Yukiko Inui showed that she is indeed a star capable of a medal winning performance with the best in the world. Like Carbonell, Yukiko will be competing in six more events this week.

Although Ukraine's Marta Fiedina, the youngest athlete of this group at just seventeen years old, finished just outside the podium, she gave a performance with her "Flight above Ground" themed routine that showed talent and promise for future World Championships. Canada's Jacqueline Simoneau, with an unusual move by swimming a different routine in finals than she did in the preliminary round, had to be satisfied with a personal best score and a fifth place finish. Simoneau's finals routine was swum to the song "Cry me a river" by Canadian native Michael Bubble.



Yukiko Inui (JPN) - Photo by gettyimages

QUOTES

Svetlana Kolesnichenko (RUS), gold:

On her “Lara Croft” tech solo:

“Actually I found the music first. I didn’t know that it was the sound track for ‘Lara Croft’ movie. I haven’t even seen it. For me this programme is about fighting with your own fears, nerves and challenging technical elements in the routine.”

On the difficulty of her programme:

“I’m happy for the gold and for the points I’ve got today. In technical solo you are always focused on the elements. I have a very tough one at the end of the routine: barracuda. I was nervous about it. To tell you the truth I didn’t perform it the way I wanted. But it was quite good.”

Ona Carbonell (ESP), silver:

On her achievement in solo:

“I think it’s a difficult championship for me. I will swim nine times. I swam two times today and I have seven more. I’ll try to rest in the night. This is my seventh World Championships. With this silver I have 21 medals. So I’m very happy”.

On her performance to Nelson Mandela’s speech:

“I feel good. It’s a very creative and innovative choreography. It is not easy to dance with one voice, a man’s voice. But I tried to do my best in technique and to enjoy my solo. And to make people enjoy my performance. This was my goal. I think the audience received my message.”

Yukiko Inui (JPN), bronze:

“I’m happy that this time I got a medal. It was great to stand on one podium with Ona and Svetlana. I will try to show a great performance in free routine too.”
