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## Diving, Day 3: Two more titles for Team China

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At the third day of the Diving competition at the 18<sup>th</sup> FINA World Championships, China earned the two titles at stake, confirming its supremacy so far (five gold in five finals contested) in Gwangju. If in the women's 10m platform synchro the victory was undeniable from the first dive on, the men's 1m springboard final was more unpredictable, with several changes in the lead.

Teenager pair Zhang Jiaqi/Lu Wei performed as the “Wonder Girls” by getting the women's 10m platform synchro title and locked the tenth consecutive success for China in the event.

Zhang/Lu, competing in their first Worlds, built up their dominance since the beginning of the final and performed five flawless dives, winning in 345.24 points.



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Zhang, 15, was the double winner in the individual and synchro platform at the World Cup in Wuhan, with a different partner (Zhang Minjie). She is now competing with 13-year-old Lu since the end of last year. The new pair bagged victories at the FINA/CNSG Diving World Series in Sagami-hara, Japan and Beijing, China before they downgraded to bronze medals

in Montreal, Canada.

Competing in her 10<sup>th</sup> Worlds, Malaysian veteran Mun Yee Leong and Pandelega Pamg, in her sixth Worlds, showed once more that stability and experience were the most important elements as they won the silver medal in 312.72.



Silver medallists from Malaysia - Photo by gettyimages

Canadian duo Meagan Benfeito/Caeli McKay placed third after four dives and were expecting to keep the position until the end. However, they were overturned by Samantha Brombe/Katrina Young of the United States by 0.81 points after the whole competition as the Americans came out with a strong last dive 5253B (Back 2 1/2 somersault 1 1/2 twists) and stood up on the podium for the bronze medal in 304.86.

### **Men's 1m springboard**

Earlier in the afternoon, "Latecomers come first" was the theme of the men's 1m springboard final as the Chinese debutant Wang Zongyuan enjoyed his new title as the world champion after he came from behind to win the men's 1m springboard, followed by Mexican veteran Rommel Pacheco and defending champion Peng Jianfeng of China. It was the seventh consecutive 1m springboard victory for the Chinese divers at the worlds.

Wang, pace setter in the heats, suffered a rusty start in the 1m final with a tied third place in his first dive, fifth in the second and down to seventh in the third dive (305B). The 18-year-old Wang seemed to find out his right form from the fourth attempt, by scoring a game-high 86.70 in the 405B (Inward 2 1/2 somersault pike) which helped him move to the second position. Wang secured the top place in the last two dives and earned a winning total of 440.25 points.



Photo by gettyimages

Pacheco and Peng all did the same feat as they surged from behind to win the silver (420.15) and bronze (415.00), respectively. The Mexican started from 12<sup>th</sup> while Peng was sixth after the second round.

South Korean diver Woo Ha-ram was one step away from the podium despite his impressive start. Woo once led the field after the first and fourth rounds, but he faded in the fifth dive with a poor entry. He came to fourth with 406.15 and Patrick Hausding of Germany concluded in fifth (405.05).

## QUOTES

### **Zhang Jiaqi (CHN), gold, women's 10m synchro:**

"We did two big mistakes in the easy dives this morning. So we took time to check out the problems through video watching. We improved in the final and we won the gold. It was the first worlds for both of us, we were very nervous indeed. We encouraged each other before and after each dive. That helped us a lot."

**Lu Wei (CHN), gold, women's 10m synchro:**

"We started to be a synchro pair since the end of last year. We try to practice synchronisation as often as possible. I will compete in both individual and synchro in Gwangju. I hope the synchro title can boost my confidence in the individual."

**Mun Yee Leong (MAS), silver, women's 10m synchro:**

"We were long-time partners but we did not compete in the synchro for two years. I felt great we could still finish with medals and earn the Olympic berths together."

**Pandelela Pamg (MAS), silver, women's 10m synchro:**

"The silver medal brought my memory 10 years ago when we won bronze at the Rome Worlds. We could still improve after 10 years! I want to say thank you to my coach."

**Katrina Young (USA), bronze, women's 10m synchro:**

"We were excited to get the Olympic qualification and finished third at last. In fact, we were very nervous before the last dive which was our favourite. But when we were on the platform, we concentrated on our own dive, not the others."

**Wang Zongyuan (CHN), gold, men's 1m:**

"I could not sleep well last night. was in a fog and got lost in the first half of the competition. Then I started to realise I was at the bottom of the ranking and should bounce to the top. My coach also encouraged me to be focused on the technical details. I was still nervous and did not know where to put my hands on. I was happy that I could get the gold medal and keep the Chinese winning streak for the seventh time! I hope one day I can compete at the Olympic Games."

**Rommel Pacheco (MEX), silver, men's 1m:**

"It was my eighth Worlds Championships. A silver medal was the best birthday gift since I just celebrated my 33-year birthday two days ago. I did not train much in the 1m springboard, so my Degree of Difficulty was lower than most of the divers. I tried to dive as good as possible and waited until the last dive, then the silver came. I did not expect to win at all."

**Peng Jianfeng (CHN), bronze, men's 1m:**

"I could not believe that I did much worse in the final than I usually do during training. But a bronze at least was a comfort to me."

**Woo Ha-ram (KOR), fourth, men's 1m:**

"I missed the timing on the entry, and I wasn't in a great position in that dive. But I'd like to pat myself on the back for competing against the world's best divers. At my first worlds in 2013, I was more than 100 points behind the top divers. I've narrowed the gap, and with just a little more push I will be better in the future."

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