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Diving, Day 4: China remains flawless

Zhou Xin, FINA Media Committee Member

Chinese divers kept their unbeaten streak at the Gwangju FINA World Championships as Shi Tingmao/Wang Han and Cao Yuan/Chen Aisen won two more synchro titles at the fourth day of the competition. Cao Yuan became the first double winner in Gwangju as he and two-time Olympic champion Chen Aisen dominated the men's 10m platform final and brought China the seventh title in a row in this event.

Cao, 2012 London Olympic champion and bronze medallist at the 2013 Worlds, moved to 3m springboard since then and won the 3m title at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. In Gwangju, he claimed the 3m synchro crown with Xie Siyi two days ago and then built up his reputation on the synchro platform, again. Cao also competes in the individual 3m springboard on July 17.



The medallists in the 10m platform synchro - Photo by gettyimages

Starting from second place in the first round, Cao/Chen led the field from the second dive and never looked back by keeping high poise in their four free attempts, all in 90+ points. Their fourth dive, a 207B (Backward 3 1/2 somersault pike) collected as high as 97.20 and contributed to the gold, in 486.93.

For the same 207B, Russian pair Viktor Minibaev/Aleksandr Bondar were rusty in 65.88 but they remained smooth most of the time by finishing in 444.60, 42.33 behind the Chinese divers. The Russian pair maintained the second place they achieved in Budapest 2017.

Tom Daley/Matthew Lee set the tone as the third best from the beginning and were once one step higher by succeeding a 207B (tied the day-high, 97.20, with Cao/Xie). The British duo had a poor 307C in the following round (57.12) and settled for bronze in 425.91.



Shi Tingmao/Wang Han (CHN) - Photo by gettyimages

Women's 3m springboard synchro

Stability was the key as the Chinese tandem Shi Tingmao/Wang Han got the gold in the women's 3m springboard synchro and extended to 10 the number of consecutive victories for China in this event.

Shi/Wang dominated from the beginning of the final and performed flawless dives in all five attempts, sealing the win in 342.00 points. It was Shi's fourth consecutive synchro gold medal (two times with Wu Minxia, one time with Chang Yani) since 2013 and first Olympic event victory for Wang.



Melissa Beaulieu/Jennifer Abel (CAN) - Photo by gettyimages

Melissa Citrini Beaulieu/Jennifer Abel of Canada stayed in the second position in every dive and secured the silver medal in 311.10, 30.90 behind the Chinese duo.

Competing in her 10th World Championships, former 10m platform world champion Paola Espinosa bounced back with consistent dives. She and her new partner Melany Hernandez Torres bagged the bronze in 294.90.

Two days after capturing a historic medal in 1m springboard for the host country, South Korean Kim Su-ji and her partner Cho Eun-bi finished 12th among the 12 finalists. Kim is the first South Korean diver to win a world championships medal.



Paola Espinosa/Melany Hernandez (MEX) - Photo by gettyimages

QUOTES

Cao Yuan (CHN), gold, men's 10m synchro:

“I competed in the synchro springboard and now synchro platform at the Worlds. I need to get used to different events, different partners and different feelings in the air. I did not perform well in some dives as I made mistakes in the entry. I tried hard on the physical training the last two months since I also got the chance to compete in the 3m springboard individual in Gwangju. My goal is try to dive as perfect as possible.”

Chen Aisen (CHN), gold, men's 10m synchro:

“We talked about our target before the final - we hoped to get 500+ points. We were very close to that. So next time we should set our goal higher than that and maybe we have better results. It was the best performance I did this year. We were lucky that we made the team through our three-leg national Olympic trials.”

Tom Daley (GBR), bronze, men's 10m synchro:

“Obviously we are massively happy to be world medallists and grab a spot for the Olympic Games. That was the main thing. At this point in the Olympic cycle, bronze is as good as gold in my eyes, because that's often the hardest thing. It will be a really tough game in 2020.”

Wang Han (CHN), gold, women's 3m synchro:

“We not only had injuries but also had fatigue and stress. We had to use our own time to cure the injuries. Every day, we trained very late. And then we went to the medical centre. A lot of time was taken away. You have to sleep as much as you can... That’s the way to cure my injury.”

Shi Tingmao (CHN), gold, women's 3m synchro:

“Two of our youngest divers of the team won the women's 10m platform synchro, I was impressed. It is important for me to get a gold medal today, but what's more important is to pass the spirit of Chinese diving team down to the younger generation. You cannot restrict yourselves to gold medals.”

Jennifer Abel (CAN), silver, women's 3m synchro:

“Our goal was to qualify for the Olympic Games. We were very glad that we made it.”

Paola Espinosa (MEX), bronze, women's 3m synchro:

"I was happy that I was back to the worlds after two years. I am still in love with diving. So I came back and realised the goal to earn the Olympic ticket for Mexico."

