

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

High Diving, Day 2: Iffland wins thrilling duel with Jimenez

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In quite an exciting final, it was needed to wait for the very last dive of the competition to know the outcome of the women's high diving event at the FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR). And for just 0.15 points – the tiniest margin ever –, Rhiannan Iffland, from Australia, managed to revalidate her 2017 world title, beating, also for the second time in the FINA showcase Mexico's Adriana Jimenez. Jessica Macaulay (GBR), taking part in her first World Championships, earned bronze.

It was an extremely tight duel between Iffland and Jimenez, and the final result perfectly illustrates the tiny difference between the two stars: the Australian, also winner of the 2018 World Cup, completed the competition in 298.05, while the Mexican ace, gold medallist at the 2017 World Cup, had to content with silver in 297.90.



Adriana Jimenez (MEX) - Photo by gettyimages

However, until the end of the third round – the competition comprised a total of four rounds, two in the preliminaries on Tuesday, and the last two in today's final –, Jimenez seemed to have the gold in her hands. After Day 1, she was first with

148.20, while Iffland was only fifth with 132.95. In her third combination, the Mexican was again pretty solid – 63.70 points for a DD 2.6 dive -, and continued in the lead of the final. At this stage, she had collected 211.90 points, while the Australian, also strong with a 66.30 point-dive, was at 199.25 (fourth).

In the last round, Iffland performed her favourite dive (inward 3 somersaults, ½ twist in the tuck position) and amassed 98.80 points from the judges – an excellent score for a flawless combination. Jimenez, the last one to dive, also executed a good dive, but the 86.00 points for her back 3 somersaults, pike were not enough to secure the first place.



Jessica Macaulay (GBR) - Photo by gettyimages

The bronze went to Macaulay in 295.40, the first medal at this level for the British diver, fourth of the 2018 World Cup and 12th in the same competition in 2017.

QUOTES

Rhiannan Iffland (AUS), gold:

“It's a great feeling to have this gold. It was a fight until the end, but we love this kind of competition – a healthy competition. I feel very proud, and I am sure back home my Mum will also be thrilled. I felt a bit nervous, but I kept the dive I feel more comfortable with for the end. It's difficult to handle all those emotions at the top of that platform, but I manage to flip them around and bring in some positive energy. That's why I love this sport. That's awesome to be a woman and to be involved in such an extreme sport. High Diving has taught me a lot in life – it brought me a lot of confidence. On this event, I must confess I was surprised with the final result – I thought Adriana had the gold!”

Adriana Jimenez (MEX), silver:

“It’s always a huge satisfaction for me to bring my name’s country, Mexico, to the podium. I had a challenging year, with many ups and downs, but in the end I am quite satisfied with this medal and to share this moment with all this amazing girls. I usually never follow the dives of the other athletes. I listen to music, and I think on my own performance – I try to execute well one dive after the other. My last dive was perhaps one of the most difficult moments I lived. I think I did it quite well, but was not enough this time...Fear? Of course, you are always afraid. But this is good: it shows you respect what you are doing. You can do the same dive hundreds of times, you are always afraid before executing it. We are very brave people, but also very responsible people. All we do has a calculated risk, and we know exactly what we can do and what we cannot do. All the divers felt very comfortable here, the set-up of the venue is really nice!”

Jessica Macaulay (GBR), bronze:

“Being my first World Championships, I am obviously very thrilled to win this medal. From nine to 21 years old I was doing traditional diving. Then, in 2014, I tried high diving – the scariest thing I’ve done in life! But I continued and I progressively gained confidence and started to compete in 2017. I keep trying new things and this effort paid off today. We are definitively a group of brave and powerful girls doing something that other cannot do. High Diving enables people to overcome their fear.”



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