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Youth Artistic Swimming Worlds, Samorin, Day 2: Fans thrilled as Russia and Ukraine go ahead

Olga Kamardina, FINA Correspondent in Samorin

An action-packed second competition day of the 1st FINA Youth World Artistic Swimming Championships in Slovakia saw 4 nations dominating in the contest.

Russian girls were the standout team of the tournament in the Free Combination prelims, earning their impressive overall to leave the chasers some 2 points adrift. On the Duets part, their path was not less straightforward, though ever strong Ukraine and Italy put on a class performance to cumulate a preliminary overall over 80.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

DUETS PRELIMINARY

Performing with their distinctive clean style, the Russian duet proved a cut above the other duets in execution and synchronisation. With a strong technical program over the music of “Knyaz (Prince) Igor Opera Violetta Evenko and Diana Mirgazizova finished ahead of the 31-participant queue in the free preliminary routine. Swimming at the X-bionic center of Samorin, they clearly enjoyed what they did, including busts, enduring links and twists and were assessed accordingly – total of 86.1000 (25.8000 + 34.4000 + 25.9000). Russian prodigies are currently 2.8000 points ahead of the second place, that is attributed to Ukraine’s amazing “Splashes of adrenaline” by Sofiiia Sereda and Anastasiia Soldatenkova.

“We love difficult program very much, - confessed Ukrainian coach **Kseniya Titorenko**. – It is not a new one, taken after Aleksii sisters scoring silver at the Junior Worlds last year. We have already presented it to the public once in Croatia Open-2018, and every time we do it, we strive to improve ourselves. There were a number of challenging links in the beginning, in the midst and at the end of the program, which required extra breath control. We are pleased with the way the girls performed today and with the scores received – 24.7000 on the execution, 33.7332 – on the artistic impression and 25.4000 – on the difficulty. The duo international debut is done well, and we will keep our fingers crossed, that she should make it even better to the final”.

“Our girls are not that tall, standing out of the modern trend in place for the duets, - says Russian coach **Natalia**

Mendygaliyeva. – In my country we say, that a diamond is small, but it shines bright. Both Violetta and Diana did a great job, getting ready the program, and this is one of the components of their success. They feel the music and choreography”.
The top 12 included 2 countries from the Americas, 3 from Asia and 7 from Europe.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

Italian Vittoria Meucci/Susanna Pedotti came third, showcasing their speed and synchronization for their fresh "Isot Nimet" cover version, which earned "Sette Rossa" a total of 80.0668 points. This was definitely less than at COMEN Cup final, however still a strong message to their competitors.

Iberian Mercedes Diaz and Alba Garcia also underscored comparing to their best of Geneva and currently rank 5th, playing back to China and overlooking Japan and Kazakhstan. In fact, reigning COMEN Cup vice-champions and members of the national senior team looked rattled after the swim, and had every reason to be. There were a lot of mistakes in the "Snakefood" portion, like scratches in the footwork performing choreography and asynchronization in the central part of the show.

"We did not hear the music, - explained **Mercedes Diaz**. – There were some problems, we have to sort them out. We mean we can swim much better, for example we did the same program in Geneva 2 weeks ago, and coped with the complicated choreography pretty well, landing on second. Now we lost to ourselves some 3 points".

Greek students Eleni Fragkaki/Krystalena Gialama inherited the image of Tarzan to land on the eight place, 77.3668, followed by France, Germany, USA and Canada, all standing within 2 points. Hungarian duo of Emiia Kozma and Zsofia Szalkay presented to the world their "Butterflies" portion, which dress rehearsal had been staged during the FINA Women's World League Water Polo Super Final in Budapest. Austrian Naemi Arockner and Valentina Strahsberger showcased a piece staged by Anna Maria and Eirini Vasiliki for their 2019 season. Kazakh Anna Pavletsova and Yuliya Rogaleva, #4 at the General classification of the COMEN Cup, did a very attractive "Italian Job" performance to rank currently on position 11.

Slovak Linda McDonnell and Chiara Diky (currently #18) had the honor to raise the curtain for the duets. The presented an "Ama Luna" Cirque du Soleil program, which has been significantly upgraded comparing to COMEN Cup of 2018.

"It is a great experience swimming at home, - shared after the swim **Linda McDonnell**, daughter of a famous Slovak

artistic swimming specialist and LOC chief Jana McDonnell. – Stands are full of spectators, who are readily supporting us, which give us additional motivation and energy. We love outdoor arenas, and have been training here in Samorin all summer. Hope, our fellow-athletes from other world countries enjoyed this experience as well”.

“This is the first time for our duet they train and compete at the outdoor facilities, - confessed Korean coach **Hyunsun Park**

(#20). – This is a challenge, but a very exciting one. Therefore the marks are not so high, but it adds to the experience of our young girls Yoojung and Kim, who are going to compete at the National championships later this September”.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

Yi Xian Petra Chiang and Sandra Sen-li Tay of Singapore (#27) tried to mimic the movements of a snake over the music of “Spitfire” by Prodigy. The tempo set was definitely a challenge for a young duet, which had to build chemistry during 3 weeks.

“Snakes are graceful and very flexible, - commented on the theme's choice Yi Xian. – I think we have managed to fully inherit the image and produce good impression on the public. We have been training hard, 5 hours a day to make it possible come to Samorin with this program. We will keep on growing and drilling the skills, and our next international competition will be Asian junior next year”.

FREE COMBINATION PRELIMINARIES

Preliminaries showed, that the chase on medals in the Free Combo final will be a three way battle. All contenders chose classical music impressing the crowd with their precise work, high amplitude and up tempo.

Russia, as usual, provided the story of the night on their “The Barber of Seville” by Rossini. They posted the absolute high of 87.6000 points, setting the standard for artistic impression – 35.2, execution – 26.3 and difficulty – 26.1. Best traditions of the Russian ballet had a visible impact on the routine, staged by the 3 times Olympic champion Olga Brusnikina.

“The most difficult thing was to calm everyone down before the start, - told **Diana Mirgazizova** of Russia. - We

have been training hard 5 hours a day, we have great coaches, the best in the world, and all left on us was to go out and do what we can. It was a pleasure to swim the difficult choreography, because it was inherently implemented into the music”.

“We even thought to sew ballet skirts, which in Russian we call “pachka”, - added coach **Natalia Mendygaliyeva** on the

choice of the swimsuits. – We did not find the right mechanics to this attribute, which could have definitely added to the spectacularity of the deckwork. We stopped our choice on rather standard red costumes with golden lining. Girls have done a great job, and absolutely deserved the high marks and compliments on their part”.



Ukraine has reached spectacular highs as well. The 10-girls group was a “Per Gynt” ballet adapted to water featuring legs and arms moving synchronically on a good height, as their patterns covered a good part of the swimming pool, and their soloists executed some impressive highlights. They received 85.9332 split on 25.6000 + 34.5332 + 25.8.

“The first part was lyrical and the second cheerful as the tempo went up right to the end of the composition. It was

our design to make the program more dynamic, - comments Ukrainian coach **Almira Evstratova**. – We challenged

endurance of our young team, which performed complicated links and combinations able to decorate any senior team's performance. It's typical for my nation. Ukraine always stages strong portions".

Spanish mission in Samorin is definitely complete for the prelims as they finished on the third position of the 17-participant agitated crowd. Their most spectacular move of their Strauss inspired program was a highlight in middle of the routine, though they did not cope with one preceding it at start. The resulting overall of 83.6668 showed that they outscored themselves comparing to the COMEN Cup this August.

"We are quite satisfied with the swim, but we wanted to show more, - emphasized Iberian coach **Laura Lopez**.

-There were little mistakes, and of course, judges noticed them, which was reflected in the overall. We shall definitely do our best to get improved by the final. To show more passion, more character, more accuracy...yes, we are all chasing perfection".

The fourth of the most successful groups represented China and their deep forest, 82.6668. Japan came after with their vision of "Romeo and Juliet" story, consisting of 3 parts to highlight various stages of the relationships, 81.8000. Italy is currently on position 6 as their overall had been deducted for making use of the bottom, 80.1000. Greece energized the crowd on their "Wonder woman" story, 79.9333. The other successful nations standing in the top 11 are: Kazakhstan, Greece, Switzerland, Belarus and host Slovakia, which stood within 4 points, from 79.800 to 75.0332.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

A surprise in store was Chile with their spirited Queen-medley portion. They demonstrated a really good height and clean lines, and had chemistry in the water. They scored 73.7332 points only to currently reside on the 12th, but left a very good impression on all – referees and spectators.

"The atmosphere here in Samorin is awesome, - said coach **Olaya de Pedro**. Organisers have done a great job. There

are no problems at all and we are happy to be focused entirely on the competition process. It was a long journey here, and we very much appreciate the experience gained here. In Chile we always swim indoors, so outdoor conditions, when the sun is always shining is something new”.

The competition continues on Friday, 30 August, with the Figure Session, which will be a good "basic skills" test for the 332-contestants waiting crowd.

Competition results. 1st FINA World Youth Artistic Swimming Championships. Day 2

Duet Preliminary – Free Routine

1. Violetta Evenko/Diana Mirgazizova (RUS) 86.1000, 2. Sofiia Sereda/Anastasiia Soldatenkova (UKR) 83.8332, 3. Vittoria Meucci/Susanna Pedotti (ITA) 80.0668, 4. Feixue Yan/Xiaoyou Zhang (CHN) 79.8000, 5. Mercedes Diaz/Alba Garcia (ESP) 79.4668, 6. Yumika Inatomi/Kiyono Nakaita (JPN) 79.3668, 7. Anna Pavletsova/Yuliya Rogaleva (KAZ) 78.4000, 8. Eleni Fragkaki/Krystalenia Gialama (GRE) 77.3668, 9. Maelys Callennec/Oriane Jaillardon (FRA) 77.1332, 10. Klara Bleyer/Nicole Davidovich (GER) 76.3332, 11. Yujin Chang/Emily Ding (USA) 76.0000, 12. Mya Fortin/Charlotte Gray (CAN) 75.7668, 13. Valeryia Puz/Valeriya Shymanskaya (BLR) 75.3332, 14. Milla Morel/Gaia Rasmussen (SUI) 75.3332, 15. Mare Schallenberg/Marloes Steenbeek (NED) 75.1000, 16. Naemi Arocker/Valentina Strahsberger (AUT) 74.0000, 17. Olivia Baker/Robyn Swatman (GBR) 72.9332, 18. Chiara Diky/Linda McDonnel (SVK) 72.9000, 19. Marica Brabcova/Diana Cipova (CZE) 72.4332, 20. Yoojung Choi/Kim Hyunmyung (KOR) 72.4000, 21. Maryam Mohamed Hassan Maghraby Abdalla/Nadine Wissam Armia Bar Soum (EGY) 72.0332, 22. Soledad Garcia/Trinidad Garcia (CHI) 71.1668, 23. Emilia Kozma/Zsofia Szalkay (HUN) 70.8668, 24. Maja Kalisz/Oliqia Smektala (POL) 69.2668, 25. Danna Corredor/Catalina Orozco (COL) 67.8668, 26. Maria Alavidze/Gvasalia (GEO) 67.3332, 27. Yi Xian Petra Chiang/Sandra Sen Li Tay (SGP) 67.0000, 28. Milica Stankovic/Sara Stojanovic (SRB) 64.2332, 29. Davida Bonanno/Valentina Marchi (MLT) 62.2332, 30. Priscilla Barboza Alpizar/Anna Mitinian Diakov (CRC) 60.9668, 31. Kaitlyn Doms/Casey Williams (RSA) 59.9668.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

Free Combination – Preliminary

1. RUS (Alena Bakai, Violetta Evenko, Daria Kirsanova, Polina Lartseva, Diana Mirgazizova, Daria Ogorodnikova, Aleksandra Prudius, Viktoriia Rodionychева, Anna Sokolova, Eva Zelenko, Alia Akhmetzianova – R, Lyaysyan Mustafina – R) 87.6000
2. UKR (Mariia Bogdanova, Valeriia Hryhorova, Sofiia Matsiievskа, Sofiia Sereda, Anastasiia Shmonina, Anastasiia Soldatenkova, Alisa Sopelnyak, Valeriya Tyschenko, Inha Valkova, Anna Yefimova, Mariia Martyntseva – R, Arina Shteplyuk – R) 85.9332
3. ESP (Claudia C.Ballero, Regina Casino, Aitana Crespo, Mercedes Diaz, Alba Garcia, Marina Garcia, Carolina Lassaletta, Carmen Beato, Clara Lamagrande, Valeria Parra, Maria Boffil – R) 83.6668
4. CHN (Yutong An, Siyuan Chen, Yuxin He, Pengzhen Long, Wangxuanjing Qiao, Yuxing Wang, Feixue Yan, Nike Yang, Xuaoyou Zhang, Wanyi Zhang, Siyi Chen – R, Huiyan Xu – R) 82.6668
5. JPN (Umi Awaiharu, Moka Fujii, Kokoro Mikami, Kiyono Nakaita, Wakaba Nishimura, Hiyori Okano, Reona Shigeyama, Ayano Shimada, Natsuha Taneda, Sakurako Uchida, Yumika Inatomi – R) 81.8000
6. ITA (Alessia Austranti, Georgia Caprasecca, Benedetta Dori, Benedetta Gianazza, Alessia Macchi, Giorgia Macino, Vittoria Meucci, Susanna Pedotti, Beatrice Petta, Aurora Puccianti, Arianna di Lecce, Matilde Neri – R) 80.7000
7. KAZ (Karolina Ivanova, Yelizaveta Lepikhova, Arina Myasnikova, Emma Pashkovskaya, Anna Pavletsova, Arina Pushkina, Yuliya Rogaleva, Yasmin Tuyakova, Darina Valiullina, Zhaklin Yakimova, Yana Shevchenko – R, Valeriia Stolbunova – R) 79.8000
8. GRE (Konstantina Angelopoulou, Aikaterini Bekou, Vagia Stavroula Eleni, Konstantina Filenta, Zoi Karangelou, Maria Karapanagiotou, Ifigeneia Krommydaki, Efthalia Despoina Pagoni, Georgia Zotali, Eleni Fragkaki, Krystalenia Gialama – R) 79.3000

9. SUI (Soraya Banz, Jessica Jutz, Milla Morel, Martina Movtchan, Sofie Muntener, Alice Ponsar, Gaia Rasmussen, Clara Sonney, Anna Tary, Shirley Zahnd, Morgana Cristofori – R, Anastasija Stojkovic – R) 77.2000
10. BLR (Neli Kaburneyeva, Lizaveta Kasouskaya, Ksenia Lebedzeva, Anastasia Liplianina, Aliaksandra Petrachenka, Valeryia Puz, Valeryia Shymanskaya, Yana Tratseuskaya, Khrystsina Zhyhalka, Palina Zmiyeuskaya) 76.4332
11. SVK (Ema Bartolcicova, Hana Bartolcicova, Nicol Dyky, Chiara Diky, Laura Domcekova, Tereza Durisova, Karoline Athene Floreanova, Linda McDonnell, Emily Rebecca Italy, Rebeka Bugalova – R, Nina Zdanova – R) 75.0332
12. CHI (Magdalena Alvarez, Elisa Carrier, Soledad Garcia, Trinidad Garcia, Camila Hernandez, Antonia Mella, Isidora Mendez, Josefa Morales, Valentina Valdivia, Rocio Vargas, Theodora Garrido – R) 73.7332
13. CZE (Anna Cisarova, Anastazie Jarosova, Katerina Krecmerova, Julie Lewczyszynova, Isabelle Neuschlova, Nela Perinova, Julia Svajda, Dominika Svetlikova, Sofie Svobodova, Eva Trubkova, Marika Brabcova – R, Diana Cipova – R) 72.3332
14. EGY (Amina Ahmed Ezzat Elfeky, Sondos Ahmed Mohamed Mohamed, Miriam Ahmed Yosry Mohamed Mahmoud, Malak Akram Ibrahim Habesha, Farida Amr Ahmed Abdelbary, Mayar Khaled Ahmed Abdalla, Maryam Mohamed Hassan Maghraby Abdalla, Salma Tarek Awad Ali Marei, Malak Tarek Mohamed Zaki Elkafoury, Nadine Wissam Armia Bar Soum, Khadiga Ibrahim Mohamed Nasser Mohamed Lotfy Abaza – R, Madiha Mohamed Sayed Ahmed Salem – R) 71.6000
15. HUN (Alexandra Bankuti, Nike Barta, Mirtill Csarnai, Hanna Hatala, Lilla Jazzmin Illes, Eniko Illes, Eniko Kozari, Emilia Kozma, Adelin Regenyi, Zsafia Szalkay, Lili Gubala – R, Borbala Kisteleki – R) 70.5000
16. AUS (Bianca Chira, Tess Hay, Zoe Hewson, Margo Joseph, Anastasia Kusmawan, Maria Nadezhdina, Lena Pedersen, Zoe Poulis, Charlotte Smith, Chantelle Wheatley, Anneke Bak – R, Georgia Brown – R) 67.9000
17. RSA (Kaitlyn Doms, Mbali Hlope, Kathleen Jarvis, Skye MacDonald, Tiffany Mather, Teagan Moffat, Siphokazi Myende, Xera Vegter Maharajh, Casey Williams, Fenella Wyly, Arny Gluckman – R) 61.7668
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