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## Youth Artistic Swimming Worlds, Samorin, Day 4: medals on offer grabbed by 5 nations

Olga Kamardina, FINA Correspondent in Samorin

The 1st FINA World Youth Artistic Swimming Championships hit its midst at the X-Bionic Arena of Samorin, Slovakia, featuring some of the finest under 15 age group talents competed passionately and emotionally.

The penultimate day of the competition produced the first ever ranking for the youth soloists, Mixed Duets and Free Combination teams. As expected, Russian and Ukraine powerhouses grabbed all top merits on offer, when they were present in the competition, leaving the door open for other nations to try their luck in the mixed duet final.

### **SOLO FREE FINAL**

There were no real doubts as to the name of the champion in solo and roughly 5 points separated the champion from the rest of the chasing crowd. Daria Kirsanova of Russia set a high bar opening the group of medal contenders in the final, as the next 3 updid their very best, but couldn't quite match and catch her.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

In fact, Russian did even better than in the prelims. She delivered a tremendous winter-theme program, which married the music of Astor Piazzola and Antonio Vivaldi, staged by her mother - 3-time Olympic, 2-time world, and 9-time European champion Maria Kiseleva. She improved her marvelous routine score by almost 0.6 point for the impressive overall of 169.1116.

“I am proud of her, she is much more talented than I am, - noted Maria Kiseleva, hugging Daria. – It is very symbolic, that she has managed to win her first international gold at the inaugural FINA Youth Worlds, which definitely adds to the medal quality. I am absolutely satisfied with the way she performed today. She was gracious, performing numerous twists, and was accordingly highly assessed by the judges”.

“The most expressive legs of the Youth Worlds-2019 belong to her, - added Russian team coach Natalia Mendygalieva. – Her legs speak better than arms of many of her challengers. The win was no way easy! Here are a lot of fine girls! And our swimmer is rather timid, which does not make her life easier”.

“Adiemus” staged by junior Ukraine team coaches Olesya Zaitseva and Svetlana Saidova earned another silver, following the trend set by Marta Fiedina at the FINA Junior Worlds in Budapest. Her younger compatriot Anastasiia Soldatekova shone bright with it in Samorin as well, highlighting her enormous flexibility and skills, and charmed everyone by her artistic talent (amassed 34.1332). She got 85.0332 points en route to the 164.8164 silver overall.

“I am happy to earn silver, - said Anastasiia Soldatenkova. – I enjoyed the swim in the finals, though I was a bit tired after the exhausting Figure session of yesterday. I really liked performing outdoors, as I have been well prepared for this. For 3 weeks to go we had been training in Lvov, which has the alike facility”.



After two almost equal performances, Spanish confirmed their “small bronze” of the prelims, however the advantage of Alba Garcia, narrating a “Romeo and Juliet”, was not overwhelming. Less than 1 point separated her from Susanna Pedotti and her “Toxic” dance, and of course emotions of the two after the finish were opposite.

“We have done it, bronze in our pocket!, - Florencia Rodrigo could not contain her happiness. – First, our task was qualifying to the finals, then we did a great job performing figure, and now we have been rewarded for all the pangs taken!”

“I do not see any major mistakes in the swim of Susanna, - confessed Italian coach Sabrina Camino. – She has deserved her podium spot”.

On the lower part, final and Figure sessions have largely brushed up the resulting soloists order. Korean Goddess of darkness Yoonseo Hur move 2 up and were congratulated on the fifth position, 157.6492. On the other hand, “Sleeping beauty” Feixue Yan of China did not keep being 6th. Posting 2 points less than in the prelims, she was forced to go 5 positions down on her 153.8999 points overall. Her high initial spot was readily taken by Kazakh Arina Myaznikova, 155.5352, Orian Jaillardon of France and Japanese Kyiona Nakaita, earning 155.4333 and 154.9724 respectively.

American Claire Kim coped with emotions, kicking off the final’s showdown with her “El Conquistador” program to land on the 9th place, 154.4001. “Aquaman” by Krystalenia Gialama came after, 153.9256, right ahead of disappointing Chinese. Place #12 was again attributed to German vision of “Butterflies against mind” from Alice in the Wonderland and Klara Blair, 151.2685.

## **MIXED DUET**

Ever strong Russia and Ukraine were not a part of the mixed duet contest, encouraging other nations enter the chase on goal. A high level final saw 7 of the world’s most promising mixed duo. Performing to various music, they showcased fascinating swimsuits and impressed the ardent Slovak crowd by spirited characters and deckwork coups.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

Kazakhstan was very convincing in the final and substantially improved their winning overall of Geneva, from 152.0809 to 155.3735 points. Eduard Kim and Zhaklin Yakimova were Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson looking for smart solutions. The most smart and impressive solution of their program featured 2 longest running links in the competition. Besides, unlike in the other duets, it was the boy who was counting.

- I feel I am more responsible for the two of us, - explains Eduard. – We love swimming together and we love this program. It was a certain challenge there, but we have done a good job. This is the second win this year already as we posted the first sum at COMEN Cup in Geneva.

Spanish “Hollywood Quizt” by Cirque du Soleil outdid Kazakhstan at the free routine final, but have been not so impressive in the Figure session, which was a half of the resulting overall. For the second time this season, Maria Boffil and Dennis Gonzalez were left adrift to their Kazakhi challengers as they assumed 150.9796 points.

- We watched Cirque du Soleil and though they are so mighty athletes, - comments on the choice of the music and theme of the free portion Dennis Gonzalez.. We want to reach their level one day. We are happy that our first ever world championships brought us a silver medal, and we will definitely proceed en route to the Olympic ones. We hope, one day mixed duet in our sport will be Olympic.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

“Yormungandr from Scandinavian myth awarded bronze. High intensity rhythmic program ran Hiyori Okano and Youtaro Sato out of gas to reward by the spirit. Collecting third best for the final performance, 76.9332, they accumulated an excellent total of 147.8146 points, and the resulting advantage of 5 points to the next contender added to the bronze lining.

“We are very happy we have come to Samorin, and even more happy to go back home bringing a medal, - says Hiyori Okano. – This is a big achievement for us, provided we have been swimming together for 1 year only. It is a little sad to be leaving Slovakia so soon. We liked the outdoor facilities and the competitions very much!”.

“City of stars” by Italy to the music of Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone received 22.3 on execution and difficulty and 29.4668 on the artistic impression, but the overall let them only chase minor merits, 142.0374. Slovak duo, which was actually the main star attraction of the day, ranked 5th. one of the two, Jozef Solymos, a 14 years old ballet dancer, is very experienced to his young age. He and his sister have been a part of pre-swim in Budapest FINA World Championships 2017, besides that, he regularly competes at junior worlds and European championships, however this time, at home, he could not show his best with the 1-month-together-partner Laura Domcekova, 141.2158. Chinese take on “Mercurial” was presented by Li Hanzhang and YeMingtao to come after on 135.2412 points, followed by Canadian Angel vs. Demon, which sealed the top 7 ranking of the first ever FINA Youth Artistic Swimming Championships.

## FREE COMBINATION FINAL

After fantastic prelims, Russia wrote history as they finished atop of the Free combination final. A superb program “Barber of Seville” featuring the best traditions and inspired by the Russian ballet, had been staged by the 3 times Olympic champion Olga Brusnikina. Alena Bakai, Violetta Evenko, Daria Kirsanova, Polina Lartseva, Diana Mirgazitova, Daria Ogorodnikova, Aleksandra Prudius, Viktoriia Rodionycheva, Anna Sokolova, Eva Zelenko, Alia Akhmetzianova even bettered their marvelous score of 2 days ago, assuming 88 strict points, which was a strong message to their ever opponents Ukraine in the chase on gold.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

“I was nervous before the start as we were to swim before Ukraine, I was nervous during the swim, - confessed

Russian coach Natalia Mendygalieva. - Our opponents have a good school with a good basis. So a slightest mistake could have changed the habitual for us flow of things and bring fortune to their side. We are happy with the way we performed today, and I am happy, that the girls have received gold they have deserved badly. They work hard, you can not image how hard they do, and the top title will stimulate them to the new achievements”

Ukraine swam the last in the final and was actually the only squad out of other 11 runners-up of Samorin, who cherished hopes and could stay competitive against the Russian side. They have been in possession of the most difficult and intense Free Combo featuring complicated verticals and all types of lifts. However, sensation did not come as slightly bettering the sum of the prelims (86.3000) was definitely not enough to reach Russia.

“Silver is not bad at all, and of course, we would love to win gold one day, - comments Kseniya Titorenko of Ukraine. - We have enjoyed the competition very much as there were a lot of strong teams. We shall not cease training hard to reach even higher results in the future”.

“Choreography of both teams had been a top class, and presentation proved strong, and the images – attractive. We are happy we have bronze after such strong opponents, - confessed Spanish Carmen Martin. - The bronze is absolutely a success for us, as we did not expect it. The trip was terribly useful!”

The most difficult part of the Spanish Strauss inspired program was definitely the first lap with 4 complicated lifts. Girls stood it pretty well to post 84.44332 points.

“Now we have much food for analyses, - concludes the coach. – But all in all, we are very happy and proud”.



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

The fourth of the most successful groups of the Preliminaries China did not stand emotional agitation of the final and their Deep forest was assessed by 80.6668 points only, missing 2 to stay competitive in the game. They were overtaken by Japanese, whose take on “Romeo and Juliet” by Craig Armstrong received 82.4332, and Italians, who did much better than 2 days ago and avoided deductions, 82.3332.

In the lower part of the ranking, Kazakhstan and Belarus defended their 7th and 10th positions posting 79.9000 and 76.3000 respectively. “Mamma Mia” emotional portion by Switzerland downed Greece and their “Wonder Woman” as both teams posted a little over 78 points.

According to the marks, Chile improved and they even received a compliment by the judges side on the “Queen’s medley” which was over 30 points on artistic impression. However, this did not help them climb higher than the 12th place, 74.6668. The same 11th place held true for the home hopes Slovakia, suffering clear mistakes on the synchro side of the action, which did not impact the volume of support came from the stands, 74.8332.

With one day to go in Samorin, the medal's ranking of the 1st FINA World Youth Artistic Swimming Championships sees Russia atop now with 2 gold medals, followed by Ukraine and Spain with 2 silver and 1 silver and 2 bronze pieces respectively. Kazakhstan sits on 1 gold as their Asian friends of Japan possess 1 bronze medal.

## Competition results. 1<sup>st</sup> FINA World Youth Artistic Swimming Championships. Day 4

### Mixed Duet Final/Total Result

1. Eduard Kim/Zhaklin Yakimova (KAZ) – 78.9000/155.3735, 2. Maria Boffil/Dennis Gonzalez (ESP) – 79.5668/150.9796, 3. Hiyori Okano/Youtaro Sato (JPN) – 76.9332/147.81146, 4. Viola Gamberini/Gabriele Miniak (ITA) – 74.0668/142.2158, 5. Laura Domcekova/Jozef Solymosy (SVK) 71.5668/141.2158 6. Hanzhang Li/Mingtao Ye (CHN) 70.1000/135.2412, 7. Peter Matthews-Crochetiere/Sabrina Roussel (CAN) – 69.5668/121.8394



Photo credit to Peter Sukenik

### Solo Free Final/Total Result

1. Daria Kirsanova (RUS) 87.1332/169.6116, 2. Anastasiia Soldatenkova (UKR) 85.0332/164.8018 3. Alba Garcia (ESP) 82.9000/160.6294, 4. Susanna Pedotti (ITA) 81.2668/159.6943, 5. Yoonseo Hur (KOR) 79.9668/157.6492, 6. Arina Myasnikova (KAZ) 78.8332/155.5352, 7. Orian Jaillardon (FRA) 78.0000/155.4333, 8. Kiyono Nakaita (JPN) 80.0332/154.9724, 9. Klaire Kim (USA) 76.3668/154.4021, 10. Krystalenia Gialama (GRE) 77.8668/153.9256, 11. Feixue Yan (CHN) 78.8332/153.8999, 12. Klara Bleyer (GER) 76.1332/151.2685

### **Team Free Combination Final**

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) 88.0000  
2. UKR (Mariia Bogdanova, Valeriia Hryhorova, Sofiia Matsiievska, Sofiia Sereda, Anastasiia Shmonina, Anastasiia Soldatenkova, Alisa Sopelnyak, Valeriya Tyschenko, Inha Valkova, Anna Yefimova, Mariia Martyntseva – R, Arina Shteplyuk – R) 86.3000  
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) 84.4332  
4. JPN (Umi Awaiharu, Moka Fujii, Kokoro Mikami, Kiyono Nakaita, Wakaba Nishimura, Hiyori Okano, Reona Shigeyama, Ayano Shimada, Natsuha Taneda, Sakurako Uchida, Yumika Inatomi – R) 82.4332  
5. 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) 82.3332  
6. 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) 80.6668  
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) 79.9000  
8. 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) 78.4000  
9. 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) 78.0668  
10. BLR (Neli Kaburneyeva, Lizaveta Kasouskaya, Ksenia Lebedzeva, Anastasia Liplianina, Aliaksandra Petrachenka, Valeryia Puz, Valeryia Shymanskaya, Yana Tratseuskaya, Khrystsina Zhyhalka, Palina Zmiyeuskaya) 76.3332  
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) 74.8332  
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) 74.6668

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