STRONG CONTENDERS FOR FINA BEST ATHLETES OF 2017

FINA’s six disciplines aquatic stars have received their invitations to be present at the fourth edition of the FINA World Aquatics Gala "Soirée des Etoiles" to be held in Sanya City, China, on Saturday December 2, at the Mangrove Tree Resort World Sanya Bay.

The best athletes of the year, to be announced on December 2, during an evening fully dedicated to pay tribute to the aquatic stars of the year, have been chosen through a selection process which looks at the points collected at the most important FINA events and according to the athletes’ respective ranking. In swimming, World Records points also count. Check out the criteria here

FINA President Dr. Julio C. Maglione declared: "We are looking forward to celebrating the brilliant results our best athletes have obtained in their discipline of choice. They deserve the highest recognition and this special evening will pay tribute to their success. It is a real honour to partner with Alisports for this prestigious "Soirée des Etoiles" and Sanya will be the perfect host."

The "Soirée des Etoiles" (Evening of the Stars) was first held in Doha, Qatar, in December 2014, following the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) and the FINA World Aquatics Convention. It was then organised in Budapest (HUN) where the best athletes of 2015 were awarded and in Windsor (CAN) in December 2016 to praise the 2016 winners.

For each athlete recognition, the respective coach is also awarded for its personal commitment and hard work toward the achievements of its athlete.

All the Best Athletes of the Year will be announced live on stage at the FINA World Aquatics Gala "Soirée des Etoiles".

In the meantime, let’s take a quick look at the past...

Greatest Olympian of all time Michael Phelps (USA) and Katinka Hosszu (HUN), best athlete of the year since 2014, received the swimming Award last year in Windsor (CAN), while Katie Ledecky (USA) and Adam Peaty (GBR) received a special recognition for their swimming performances at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

In diving, Chen Aisen and Shi Tingmao of China were the best in 2016 and Gary Hunt (GBR) and Lysanne Richard (CAN) received the high diving greatest distinction.
In water polo, team Serbia (men) and team USA (women) were the most successful teams of 2016.

Russia’s artistic swimming duet Svetlana Romashina and Natalia Ishchenko grabbed the Award last year, while Olympic champions of the Netherlands Ferry Weertman and Sharon Van Rouwendaal were recognised for the results in open water swimming.

**List of previous winners**

Find out more information about travel / accommodation and the host city on FINA website.

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**WATER POLO ACTION TO RETURN WITH 2018 WORLD LEAGUE**

The European preliminary rounds of the FINA Men’s Water Polo World League 2018 will kick-off on November 14 across various European cities.

The groups’ composition unfolds as follow:

GROUP A: ROU, MNE, SRB  
GROUP B: CRO, GER, RUS  
GROUP C: ESP, HUN, NED

On Tuesday November 14, Romania will play Serbia, Croatia will welcome the Russians in Zadar (CRO) and the Netherlands will face the Spanish in Malaga (ESP).

The European preliminaries will be played in six rounds, following this calendar from November 2017 to April 2018:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUND</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 November 2017</td>
<td>ROU-SRB</td>
<td>CRO-RUS</td>
<td>ESP-NED</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12 December 2017</td>
<td>SRB-MNE</td>
<td>GER-RUS</td>
<td>NED-HUN</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16 January 2018</td>
<td>MNE-ROU</td>
<td>GER-CRO</td>
<td>HUN-ESP</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>13 February 2018</td>
<td>SRB-ROU</td>
<td>RUS-CRO</td>
<td>NED-ESP</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>20 March 2018</td>
<td>MNE-SRB</td>
<td>RUS-GER</td>
<td>HUN-NED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 April 2018</td>
<td>ROU-MNE</td>
<td>CRO-GER</td>
<td>ESP-HUN</td>
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From these six rounds, the four best teams will be qualified for the Super Final to be held in June 2018, in which the four best teams from the Intercontinental Tournaments will join them.

Check out the 2018 Rules & Regulations

Team Serbia, who are the current Olympic title holders, have grabbed the World League title consecutively since 2013, while Italy and Croatia secured the silver and bronze medals respectively in 2017.

Croatia won the World Championships tournament, ahead of Hungary and Serbia, last summer in Budapest (HUN).

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**SWIMMING WORLD CUP 2017 THIRD CLUSTER RESUMES WITH BEIJING**

China's capital will play host to the first leg of the FINA/airweave Swimming World Cup’s third and final Cluster from November 10-11.
Swimming stars such as Michael Andrew of the U.S., Hungary’s Katinka Hosszu, Jamaica’s Alia Atkinson and the Campbell sisters (AUS) will be highlighting the two-day event in Beijing.

National swimming greats, Wang Shun, Ji Xinjie and Asian record holder Li Bingjie are hoped to deliver home success and lead the pool action.

Chad Le Clos (RSA) and Sarah Sjostrom (SWE), currently leading the overall ranking (312 and 446 points respectively), will also headline the competition in 10 days.

Current rankings and complete results books are available here

Follow all the final races on FINA TV and read daily reports on FINA website.