CHINA'S RESULTS BUILD ANTICIPATION FOR 2017

Great Britain's Jack Laugher started the year on high this weekend in Beijing, China, as the Olympic champion snatched the men's 3m springboard on the inaugural rendezvous of the 2017 FINA/NVC Diving World Series.

However, Laugher, 22, was the only diver to break the Chinese supremacy at this competition, preventing the leading and hosting nation golden sweep.

Jack Laugher took the lead from the beginning and beat two Chinese divers with 554.00 points, as Xie siyi won silver in 539.15 and Cao Yuan won bronze with 510.05.

Fresh from his great performance, Laugher said: "I'm very, very happy to dive here and I really enjoy this competition. This is a good start of the new season and I will keep training and preparing for the rest of the World Series and the FINA World Championships, my ultimate goal."

"I am also looking for changes, for example, improving difficulty degree of my dives." Laugher added.

Team China proved once more its excellence by grabbing nine gold medals out of ten, as well as four silver and a bronze medal.

Olympic title holder Chen Aisen took gold in the 10m (556.25) and added another gold to his tally with the 10m synchro (488.85) together with Yang Hao who came second in the 10m individual event. Tom Daley (GBR) completed the podium with 520.35.

Reflecting on a great final Chen said: "I have to say it was a real great showdown in the final that all of us performed very well,"

"I did not expect to win the title since I came back to training less than two months ago and I am now only about 50% to 60% compared to my best form. I will continue to take part in the next World Series meets and try my best to recover my techniques and peak form."

In the women's 3m springboard, Rio Olympic champion Shi Tingmao scored an excellent 391.05 points, securing the gold medal. Her teammate Chang Yani ranked second with 330.35 and Australian Maddison Keeney ranked third with 327.85.

Wang Han/Li Zheng won the mixed 3m synchro springboard title with stable dives, collecting a total of 323.10 points. They were followed by Maddison Keeney/Dominic Bedggood of Australia at 305.34 and Jennifer Abel/Francois Imbeau-Dulac of Canada with 304.74.

A total 68 international divers (31 men, 37 women) took part in the three-day event in Beijing.
The FINA/NVC Diving World Series is now heading to Guangzhou, China, for the second leg from March 9-11.

Provisional ranking and results on FINA website.

Check out the DWS Playlist on FINA Youtube Channel.

ONE STAR, ONE DISCIPLINE – WATER POLO: ASH SOUTHERN (AUS)

When your parents build a backyard swimming pool and throw in a goal and a ball, you know they want you to succeed in water polo.

When they drive their daughter two hours to training in a nearby town and two hours back again each week so she could further her burgeoning water polo career, that shows commitment.

This happened to Australian country girl Ashleigh (Ash) Southern when she was just 14 years old and trying out for the Townsville 14-and-under team to attend the Queensland State championships.

Little did her parents know that their efforts would catapult their daughter to Olympic stardom and a bronze medal, a street parade, plus have signs erected either side of the town proclaiming: “Home of Cardwell’s first Olympian Ashleigh Southern”.

“I instantly fell in love with the game”

Ash grew up in Cardwell, a North Queensland town of about 1,200 people, with her two brothers and a sister.

“I went to primary school in Cardwell and then completed high school in Ingham, a town 45 minutes away by bus. I was a member of the local swim club and swum at multiple carnivals in North Queensland and then trialled for my school flippaball (mini water polo) team and we won the tournament in Townsville,” she says.

Many years later she was to walk in the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympic Games as an Aussie Stinger and returned home a hero with a bronze medal dangling from her neck. Ash had a disdain for swimming training yet was very competitive at sports at school.

“I tried most sports and I found I was good at flippaball as it combined my swimming, but I could also catch and throw. I made the squad to try out for the Townsville 14-and-under water polo team and it went from there.”

“I loved making friends through water polo and I instantly fell in love with the game.”

[...]

“I knew I wanted to go to the Olympics”

Her breakthrough came when she debuted at the FINA World Cup in Christchurch, New Zealand, claiming the silver medal in a pool that was devastated by an earthquake a week later.

The pool has since disappeared, as have the hotels in which the athletes and officials resided, but Ash is still around. At what point did the 188cm (6 feet 2 inches) athlete realise she could be good enough to go to the Olympics?

“I remember watching the Sydney 2000 Olympics when I was just eight. I actually didn’t watch Australia win gold in the water polo (I have many times since), but I watched (Australian) Cathy Freeman win gold in athletics (400m track).”

“At the time I loved sport and I knew I wanted to go to the Olympics one day. Living in such a small town, water polo became my passion so quickly as I didn’t have
much else happening other than school. I got to travel and make many friends through water polo, so I knew putting hard work into my training would get me travelling and seeing the world.”

“I then probably realised once making my first junior world championship team that I was OK at water polo and, as it was a pathway into the senior programme, I had my foot in the door and I just had to keep on improving. I truly didn’t realise I was good enough to go to the Olympics until I went to London 2012 and proved myself at 19.”

[read more]

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FINA RELEASES SECOND VERSION OF MOBILE APP

FINA is delighted to release the second version of the recently launched FINA mobile application, with Diving being the main focus.

Diving results, news reports, videos and divers profiles are now available to all direct to your smartphone!

Follow all the action from the FINA/NVC Diving World Series 2017 other FINA competitions on the move.

The remaining disciplines - Water polo, High Diving, Synchronised Swimming and Open Water – will be included in the app before the FINA World Championships 2017 in Budapest.

Download for free on iOS & Android

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3M MEN
JACK LAUGHER
The Fédération Internationale de Natation, FINA (founded in 1908) is the governing body for aquatics worldwide. Its five disciplines - Swimming, Open Water Swimming, Diving, Water Polo and Synchronised Swimming - are all included in the Olympic programme. High Diving is on the World Championships programme since 2013. FINA organises World Championships, World Swimming Championships in 25m-pool and World Masters Championships every two years. FINA counts 207 affiliated National Federations on the five continents and has its headquarters in Lausanne (SUI).