



## Women's 10m platform and men's 3m springboard synchro in Diving

## Espinosa: first world title for Mexico

The second diving final (women's 10m platform) of the 13th FINA World Championships in Rome (ITA) was an unbelievable sensation: 23 year old Paola Espinosa (MEX) captured gold while leaving the two-time Olympic gold medallist Ruolin Chen (CHN) in her wake. The bronze medal was collected by Li Kang (CHN). This is the first gold medal (all disciplines included) for Mexico in the history of the FINA World Championships (held since 1973).

Both Chinese girls made their attacks early in the competition: Chen, the gold medallist at the Beijing Olympics in two events (10m platform and 10m synchro) won the preliminary part (388.65) while Kang scored 390.95 in semi-final. Though the preliminary and semi-final results play no role in the final (all competitors start fighting from the beginning of the deciding round with zero points), both Chinese divers showed in those initial clashes that they are prepared to compete in Rome on a high level – too high for the other competitors. Melissa Wu (AUS), the Olympic silver medallist in 10m synchro, took second place both in the prelims and semi-final, but in both cases her score was behind by more than 25 points.

Paola Espinosa (MEX) emerged from the semi-final in third position and surprised the audience with the most complicated free programme among all the competitors. She is the only female diver who is able to perform 3.5 Reverse somersaults (307 C). The degree of difficulty of this dive is 3.4.

Kang was lucky to avoid mistakes in the semi-final, but it was clear that the final would be different: it is not easy to perform all these difficult dives twice a day in such weather conditions – too hot for ideal concentration.

When the final commenced, the first round of five dives was positive for Chen and Kang (who took the second and third ranks respectively) but quite disappointing for Wu (9th) and Espinosa (7th). All four girls performed the same combination – 3.5 Forward, B position – and all did it well. The only advantage for the Chinese divers was that they had no splash on

the entry, while the other two spoiled the very last part of their dives.

Chen improved her position in the second round – moving to first place (158.30). But then Espinosa did the same. She delivered a more complicated dive (207 C) and got the first perfect “10” among her marks. That helped her to come closer to the leader (158.25), but at the end of the round the Chinese newcomer Li Kang made her own mark with yet another excellent dive and the best total score for two dives – 164.50.

The third round began, and the unique Reverse combination was very important for Espinosa: the diver earned very “medium” marks in the semi-final for this dive and in the preliminaries it caused her to come rather close not to making the semi-final at all, after placing 18th.

But when it counted most, she finally succeeded! This other “10” from the judges meant the top total score went to Paola – 91.80 for her effort, and 250.05 in total – about eight points more than Kang scored after her three attempts (242.05).

Such a brilliant beginning to the final created intrigue: the Mexican girls had never been among the real leaders on the platform in such a big competition. The only exception happened in 1994, also here in Rome, when Maria Jose Alcalá got the bronze medal, but that was 15 years ago.

Espinosa started to add the 307 C to her programme three years ago. Her best achievement before this final was a 3rd place in China at World Series, but she has been hovering around the podium at many competitions.

The fourth round turned out to be a nightmare for Wu: while performing a 3.5 Back she opened too early, hardly entered the water without an injury and got terrible marks from all the judges – between 1.5 and 2.0. Such poor marks immediately dropped her to the bottom of the list.

## Medals Table

after day 1

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	TOTAL
CHN	2	2	1	5
MEX	1	0	0	1
USA	0	1	0	1
AUS	0	0	1	1
CAN	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>

strong enough and responded by increasing the distance between herself and Kang to 13 points.

In the final round those vying for a medal were not able to make big changes: all three leaders had to perform the same twist combination – 2.5 Back with 1.5 Twists. Chen won the round (96.90 for the one dive – a record for the day), but all she was able to do, nevertheless, was overcome her compatriot and to move to second place, 10.65 behind the new World Champion Paola Espinosa.

Following her triumph, Espinosa said: “I am very happy because I competed several times against the Chinese girls and this time I managed to beat them. I was mentally strong, really focused and relaxed throughout the competition.” In a final moment of joy for Mexico's new diving icon, during the press conference following her triumph, Espinosa received a telephone call from the Mexican President Felipe Calderon. During the award ceremony, Jesus Mena, Chairman of the FINA Technical Diving Committee was officially in charge of giving the flowers to the medallists, while the FINA Honorary Treasurer Dr. Julio Maglione was in charge of the medals. When it was Espinosa's turn, Dr. Maglione gave the medal to Jesus Mena who then draped the medal around her neck. Detail: Jesus Mena, himself a Mexican national, was one of the best divers of his generation, having won a bronze

medal (10m platform) at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul (KOR).

Twenty years later, at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing (CHN), Espinosa had already become one of the positive surprises of the competition, by gaining the first medal for a female Mexican diver in the history of the Games (bronze in the synchro 10m platform).

Chen however, expressed displeasure: "I am not too satisfied. I performed average," adding, "I think Espinosa beat us because she is more experienced. She competed very well today."

One more surprise came from Malaysia: Pamg Pandelega Rinong, who had never joined the final of the adult competition, and had no experience in World Championships, did her best in every one of the five rounds and finished fifth.

### Men's 3m springboard synchro

Qin Kai and Wang Feng (CHN) captured the second gold of the Championships for China's diving team on the evening of Saturday, July 18 with a 22.35-point advantage over their closest rivals – Troy Dumais and Kristian Ipsen (USA). Alexander Despatie and Reuben Ross (CAN) finished third.

The Chinese team's representatives, who won overall at the previous World Championships in Melbourne in 2007, as well as the 2008 Olympics, were the strong favourites of the event. Despite their victor however, the Chinese divers didn't bring their best to the preliminaries: Qin Kai made an obvious mistake in the last round (2.5 Reverse with 1.5 Twists) and consequently the Chinese duo took 4th place overall – behind the USA, Canada and Great Britain (Nicholas Robinson-Baker and Benjamin Swain). This created the illusion that the favourites perhaps are not as strong as usual here at Roma09, but this impression would prove inaccurate. In reality, Kai and Feng – the most experienced team on site - led in the preliminaries almost until the end, and were saving their best for the final.

The Olympic silver medallists of Beijing - Dmitry Sautin and Yuri Kunakov (RUS) - started slowly (taking only 7th place in the prelims) but then revealed their ambitions from the beginning of the evening final. They confidently moved into second place after the second round, but all of a sudden Sautin suffered an injury, cutting his thumb while preparing the third dive.

The injury wasn't heavy, but it broke his concentration. This was especially disappointing for Sautin because Saturday's start in Rome was also the last one of his diving life. His first World Championships actually took place here in Rome in 1994, when he won the gold on 10m platform. Later, Sautin would take part in five more World Championships and took nine different medals including five gold.

Sautin and Kunakov were still in second after the fourth round, but their fifth attempt turned out to be too poor to maintain this position: in a twist dive, Dmitry made a serious mistake. The synchronisation was destroyed and the Russian team found itself in 7th place. All attempts to improve the situation in the last round were not successful: Sautin and Kunakov managed to raise just one place higher, which wasn't enough to make them happy.

The results of the top-three were not surprising: Qin Kai and Wang Feng proved that it is impossible to beat them unless they make mistakes, while Troy Dumais and Kristian Ipsen increased their preliminary result by 25 points, which was a big achievement. Alexander Despatie and Reuben Ross showed the audience what it means to be a "real competitor": the Canadian team was holding steady in the 5th spot after the 5th dive before leaping onto the podium at the last moment: finishing 0.09 ahead of Tommaso and Nicola Marconi (ITA).

### Dubai will be the Organising City of the 15th FINA World Championships 2013

The city of Dubai (UAE) will be the organiser of the 15th FINA World Championships, to be held in 2013. The announcement was made on July 18, 2009 after the FINA Bureau voted on the three Cities/National Federations that presented their candidature for this competition: Dubai (UAE), Hamburg (GER) and Moscow (RUS).

Dubai will also organise in December 2010 the 10th edition of the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m).

Before the 2013 FINA World Championships (including the five FINA aquatic disciplines), the 14th edition of this competition will take place in Shanghai (CHN) on July 16-31, 2011.

At the Press Conference announcing the winner for 2013, the FINA President Mustapha Larfaoui

also spoke about the 13th FINA World Championships Rome 2009, which will start officially today.

"We are again in the Italian capital, organising city of the 1994 FINA World Championships and certainly ready to host with the same success the major competition of the FINA calendar here at the spectacular venue of the Foro Italico", said Mr. Larfaoui. He then continued: "The first record of the competition was already established: 2600 athletes from 179 nations will be present in Rome, a new record in the history of this event."

The FINA President concluded by thanking the Organising Committee for its work and all those involved in the set-up of the competition, namely the Host Broadcaster RAI, responsible for transmitting the images of the championships in High Definition (a first in the history of the competition).

### Open Water Swimming Competition

On a meeting held today in Rome (ITA), the FINA Bureau decided to postpone the Open Water Swimming events on the programme of the 13th FINA World Championships Rome 2009, due to the weather conditions in Ostia, the location for these competitions.

According to this decision, the Open Water Swimming races will now take place according to the following programme:

- July 21, 2009: 5km Women (11:00) and 5km Men (14:00)
- July 23, 2009: 10km Women (08:30) and 10km Men (12:00)
- July 25, 2009: 25km Men (08:30) and 25km Women (08:40)



## Diving

### WOMEN – 10M PLATFORM

1. ESPINOSA Paola MEX 428.25
2. CHEN Ruolin CHN 417.60
3. KANG Li CHN 410.35
4. BENFEITO Meaghan CAN 396.50
5. PAMG Pandelega Rinong MAS 354.45
6. STEUER Christin GER 353.75
7. CROAK Alexandra AUS 351.85
8. COUCH Tonia GBR 351.00
9. LABEAU Audrey FRA 348.90
10. FILION Roseline CAN 340.20
11. WU Melissa AUS 329.75
12. KOLTUNOVA Yulia RUS 321.70

### MEN – 3M SPRINGBOARD SYNCHRO

1. QIN K./WANG F. (CHN) 467.94
2. DUMAIS T./IPSEN K. (USA) 445.59
3. DESPATIE A./ROSS R. (CAN) 428.64
4. MARCONI N./MARCONI T. (ITA) 428.55
5. FECK S./HAUSDING P. (GER) 426.24
6. KUNAKOV Y./SAUTIN D. (RUS) 416.22
7. ROBINSONBAKER N./SWAIN B. (GBR) 413.46
8. GUERRA O. J./BETANCOURT G. J. (CUB) 413.19
9. CELY D./ROSSET M. (FRA) 396.09
10. ISLAS A./RUVALCABA J. (MEX) 394.65
11. ROSLAN R./YEOH K.N. (MAS) 388.77
12. CALVO C./ILLANA J. (ESP) 384.93