



GARY HUNT WINS MEN'S HIGH DIVING TOURNAMENT

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The high diving final event has just concluded at the 16th FINA World Championships in Kazan. Gary Hunt of Great Britain, who was topping the standings in the preliminary round, became the holder of the world championships title, which is awarded only for the second time in the history of this sport.

His countryman, Blake Aldridge, shocked the high diving world with his unexpected decision to pull out of the competition not long before the start of the final event. The athlete's choice was not down to an injury he had sustained during a training session, just like it had happened the day before during the women's tournament. The thing was that today is his girlfriend's birthday and he chose to spend this day with her. It remained a secret for most people why the priority was set this way given that the event schedule had been known long before that. However, open water swimmer Simone Ruffini had already demonstrated earlier that the tournament cannot get in the way of love.

On the other hand, from the very beginning the Brit was already out of the race for medals. The thing is that according to the regulations only twelve high divers out of twenty advance to the last round after the fourth dive. Blake Aldridge placed fifteenth after the first three dives, which could hardly motivate him to continue the medal hunt.

However, the situation with his compatriot, Gary Hunt, was completely different. The first place finisher of the preliminary round could be quite optimistic about his future, considering that he was 40 points of his nearest pursuer ahead of the decisive fifth dive.

But the inaugural world champion, Orlando Duque of Colombia, succeeded to prove the foregoing wrong. The Kazan 2015 Ambassador and one of the tournament's favourites was in the eleventh place after his three dives in the preliminary stage. This fact fuelled the rumours of an upcoming sensation, but failed to shake the determination of one of the founders of this sport. His last two attempts enabled him to climb the standings five positions up.

Artem Silchenko, another Kazan 2015 Ambassador, was placing fourth ahead of the final fifth round, only one step apart from the three potential medallists. After his last dive he even managed to take the provisional lead, but moments later Mexican diver Bernal Paredes and Gary Hunt from Great Britain impressed the judges and the crowd with their remarkable dives edging Artem Silchenko out to the third place.

Interestingly, before the last round all the divers except for Russia's Igor Semashko decided to execute the dive with the same degree of difficulty (3.8). Divers usually save the most complicated dives for the last round to avoid all the possible injuries before it. It means that seven high divers who couldn't make it into the final were most likely to blame no one but themselves and their diving skills for a failure. On the other hand, unlike all other competitions, there are no losers in the high diving event. High divers do not lose, they do not suffer defeat because all of them are the world's bravest people who can dare to dive from a 27-metre platform. Every single one of them says that the high diving event is marked not by competitiveness or envy but by team spirit and sense of belonging to one big high diving family.

Anyway, there were only three places on the podium and out of the dozen of incredible divers, Gary Hunt, Bernal Paredes and Artem Silchenko ended up the ones taking the podium spots in this order. Notably, Great Britain and Mexico had already enjoyed their medals at Barcelona 2013 whereas Russia represented by Artem Silchenko got its first high diving bronze medal at the FINA World Championships.

FINA Worlds 2015. High diving.

Men. 27m platform.

1. Gary HUNT (GBR) – 629.30
2. Bernal PAREDES (MEX) – 596.45
3. Artem SILCHENKO (RUS) – 593.95

Kazanka Venue. August 5.

Press Office for Organising Committee of 16th FINA World Championships



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