



FÉDÉRATION
INTERNATIONALE
DE NATATION

Published on *FINA WebShop* (<https://shop.fina.org>)

Aquatics review of 2017: High Diving - The lottery of sport

Pedro Adrega, FINA Head of Communications

If there is a high diving moment to retain in 2017, we saw it in the final round of the men's competition at the FINA World

Championships Budapest 2017 [1]. Gary Hunt is on top of the 27m platform. He won the 2015 world title and also the 2016

and 2017 World Cup gold medals. He leads the field after the first three dives and is physically and mentally ready to execute a forward 3 somersaults 4 ½ twists, in the free position. He is the only athlete in the world capable of performing it, for a massive degree of difficulty of 5.6. The British star takes off from the board, executes all those somersaults and twists, but the entry in the water is far from perfect. The penalty arrives seconds later: marks from 3.5 to 5.0 from the judges. Hunt is off the podium, he finishes fifth in the Magyar capital.

In sport, it is known, one man's sorrow is another man's joy. Reliable American Steve LoBue was certainly not hoping for Hunt's hiccup but seized the opportunity to climb to the highest step of the podium for the first time in a FINA competition. Fourth after the second round, LoBue was by far the best in the third combination - inward 3 somersaults ½ twist - receiving a total of 99.00 points (including a perfect 10) for this DD 3.6 dive. He ascends to second place before executing his fourth and final attempt, an inward 5 somersaults ½ twist reasonably well - he is the only man on the circuit to perform five somersaults in a single dive. He gets 113.40 points for this effort and waits for his main rival's performance. Which is (surprisingly) not good. LoBue - born on June 17, 1985 - is the new world champion, with an accumulated total of 397.15.



"I tried everything, and it didn't go well"

After a silver medal some months before at the World Cup in Abu Dhabi (UAE), LoBue reaches the top of the world, beating the man who was, in theory, unbeatable. The lottery of sport also touches high diving. In Abu Dhabi, Hunt had been quite solid in the combination which undid him in Budapest (in Abu Dhabi he scored 126.00 for this dive, in Budapest only 70.00) and had also been good in a final back 3 somersaults 4 twists when he retained the title he had won in 2016, also in the UAE capital. On the shore of the Danube river, with the beautiful Hungary Parliament as a perfect background for the divers' performances, Hunt was philosophical:

"I tried everything, and it didn't go well. I have succeeded with this combination on other occasions, and today I wasn't so strong. This is sport."

After LoBue in Budapest, a very happy Michal Navratil claimed the silver with 390.90 points. The Czech Republic's most successful aquatic athlete of the last few years was also very consistent in Hungary, achieving his best ranking ever in the competition. In the four-dive final he had two performances of over 100 points: his second combination - a superb armstand back 2-½ somersaults 3 twists - worth 119.65 and his last effort, a successful forward 3 somersaults 2-½ twists which scored 109.65. Navratil was bronze medallist in Abu Dhabi at the end of April (behind Hunt and LoBue), so the "upgrade" in Budapest was an excellent motivation for the 32-year-old Czech.



Another joyful man in Hungary was Alessandro De Rose, from Italy. Seven years younger than both LoBue and Navratil, the Italian had never reached a podium position in a FINA competition. With the changes in the top ranking provoked by Hunt's misfortune, De Rose had his moment of glory, claiming an unprecedented bronze medal in high diving for his country (better known in pool diving, particularly thanks to the impressive career of recently retired Tania Cagnotto). De Rose performed quite modestly in the first two rounds - he was ninth overall - but managed to execute the second-best dive of the field in the third round, a forward 3 somersaults 1-½ twists, for which he scored 97.20. He climbs two places in the ranking and impresses the judges with his final dive, an armstand back 2-½ somersaults 3 twists, awarded 112.80 (once again the second "most valuable" dive of the round).



Besides Hunt, the three men in front of the Italian before the last combination did not finish strongly on that July 30: Miguel Garcia (COL) scored 73.60, Blake Aldridge (GBR) 72.85 and David Colturi (USA) 71.30. The podium fate was sealed, with LoBue first, Navratil second and De Rose third.

The full length article is available in the latest issue of the FINA Magazine
