

It's gold again in diving for China at Rio Olympics

By Beth Harris
AP Sports Writer

RIO DE JANEIRO — China easily won its second gold medal in diving at the Rio Olympics, dominating the men's 10-meter synchronized event while showing the rest of the world how to barely make a splash.

Chen Aisen and Lin Yue totalled 496.98 points, cruising to victory by 39.87 points.

American teammates David Boudia and Steele Johnson took silver at 457.11. Tom Daley and Daniel Goodfellow of Britain rallied to claim bronze in 445.45.

"We did our best, but I don't think it was perfect," Lin said.

Chen and Lin were especially impressive on their final two dives, totalling the most points of any team in both rounds.

China, the United States, and Britain all performed the same dive in the fifth round, a forward 4 1/2 somersaults tuck that carries one of the highest degrees of difficulty.

The Americans went first, scoring 85.47 points. China was next, with Chen and Lin putting on a clinic with a score of 106.56. They plunged into the water off the 33-foot tower with very little splash and earned a perfect 10 for synchronization.

Daley and Goodfellow went last, scoring 92.13 and good enough to move the Brits from fifth to third after the German duo of Patrick Hausding and Sascha Klein performed a less difficult dive that earned fewer points and dropped them to fourth.

"Going into the last round there is always pressure. When it's the Olympics, multiply that by a million," Daley said. "It



DIVINE DIVING. China's Lin Yue, bottom, and Chen Aisen, compete in the men's synchronized 10-meter platform diving final at the Maria Lenk Aquatic Center during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (AP Photo/Wong Maye-E)

was windy, it was cold, and we were two points behind the Germans."

In the last round, the Americans and Chinese did the same dive, a back 2 1/2 somersaults with 2 1/2 twists pike only slightly less difficult than their previous one.

Boudia and Johnson went first, scoring 95.04 points with marks as high as 9.0. Chen and Lin did even better, hitting the water in unison and being rewarded with 9.5s and 9.0s.

Lin earned his first gold in the event since 2008, when he and Huo Liang teamed to win the synchro platform in their home country. He didn't compete in the event four years ago in London.

With lots of Chinese flags and fans in the stands, the crowd booed heartily when it saw the judges' marks for Chen and Lin in the fourth round. Fans didn't think the scores ranging from 8.0 to 8.5 were nearly high enough, but it hardly mattered.

"The mistake we made is that we had a little bit of hesitation during our jump, so we did not handle it very well," Lin said.

Chen and Lin were in front from the start of the six-round final and never faltered.

Boudia and Johnson controlled second place throughout, leaving only the bronze medal up for grabs. Four years ago in

London, Boudia earned bronze in platform synchro with a different partner and gold in the individual 10-meter competition.

"One of every color," Boudia said. "I've never felt so content and so calm. You're at the Olympic Games with millions of people watching you, so it's a pretty good feeling."

Johnson, a 20-year-old diver at Indiana University, was clearly thrilled with winning a medal in his Olympic debut. He and Boudia shared a watery hug after their final dive, knowing they had clinched a spot on the podium. Johnson then covered his eyes with his hand and couldn't stop smiling.

In 2009, Johnson struck his head on the platform and was saved from bleeding out by his coach, who jumped in the pool and held his head together. He received 33 stitches and a tube in his head to drain the chlorine.

"It all worked out in the end," Johnson said, the silver medal around his neck. "The fact that I'm still alive is just more than I can ask for."

Japan sweeps judo golds at Rio Olympics in middleweights

By Maria Cheng
The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Japan swept the judo gold medals at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, taking the top spot in both men's and women's middleweight divisions.

Haruka Tachimoto struck gold first by defeating triple world champion Yuri Alvear in the women's 70-kilogram division.

Despite being penalized for passivity in the first minutes of the final — and a partisan crowd cheering against her — Tachimoto managed to pin Alvear to the ground for 20 seconds, scoring an *ippon* victory that automatically ends the bout.

Alvear, 30, won a bronze at the London Olympics. She was Colombia's flag bearer at the opening ceremony.

After a disappointing seventh-place finish at the London Games, Tachimoto said she refocused her style, training in Mongolia and England, and honing a more defensive, counter-attacking style that she used to defeat Alvear.

The women's bronze medals were won by Britain's Sally Conway and Germany's Laura Vargas Koch. A short time after the women's medal competition ended, Japan's Mashu Baker took the judo gold in the men's 90-kilogram division.

The second-seeded Baker, 21, defeated Georgia's Varlam Liparteliani in a cagey final in which Baker managed to score only



FIRST-RATE FLIPPING. Haruka Tachimoto of Japan, in white, competes against Kelita Zupancic of Canada during the women's 70-kilogram judo competition at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Japan swept the judo gold medals in Rio, taking the top spot in both the men's and women's middleweight divisions. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

once. Like Tachimoto, he too was booed by the crowd, which expressed disapproval that Baker appeared to be withdrawing from the fight in its final minutes. But with Liparteliani failing to score, Baker's one throw was enough to win.

Baker, whose father is American, trained at the Kodokan, the spiritual home of the Japanese martial art and its most famed dojo after starting judo at age six. Baker has won four judo Grand Slam titles and took a bronze at last year's world championships. He was raised by his mother in Japan and said he was dedicating his gold medal to her. She travelled with him to Rio.

"To be an Olympic champion was my dream when I was young, so I'm very happy now," he said. Baker acknowledged that he fought defensively in the latter part of the fight, seeking to protect his slight lead by not risking being

attacked by Liparteliani.

Liparteliani was seeded fifth and fought at the London Olympics, but was knocked out in the second round. The loss left him in tears; he struggled to maintain his composure through the medal ceremony.

The men's bronze medals were won by South Korea's Donghan Gwak and China's Xunzhao Cheng.

Japan's two golds put the country atop the judo medal table, adding to the gold already won by Shohei Ono in the men's 73-kilogram division. Although Japan dominated for years at the Olympics in the martial art it developed, the country had its worst performance at the London Games, where it won only one gold.

"We have to perform graciously and courageously because Japan is the home of judo," Tachimoto said after her win. "Judo is one of the most important sports to the Japanese people, and they expect gold medals."

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