

Another Medal for Freediving Sensation William Winram

Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt - November 3, 2007 - Vancouver-born William Winram announced and realized a clean 75-meter dive in the discipline of constant weight without fins (CNF, see below for definition), hence claiming the silver medal at the 4th AIDA Individual Freediving World Championships held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, from October 23 till November 3, 2007.



William Winram on his way down to 75 meters (246 feet), on a single breath of air and unaided by fins.

Last time William dove deep was at the First Annual Thermocline-Free Invitational, in Dahab, Egypt, where he broke the Pan-American record at 76 meters in CNF, on September 12 of this year.

He then resumed his pool training in Europe, but two days prior to flying back to Egypt, he developed a middle ear infection which proved to be persistent and had him patiently sit out and watch records fall at the Triple Depth Challenge in Dahab, held one week prior to the beginning of the World Championships.

Not knowing whether his ears would heal in time or not, William maintained his daily dry training and mental preparation while waiting for the antibiotics to take their course. Just days prior to the official competition, he still did not know if he could safely dive after

having spent over seven weeks without the possibility of deep water training. On November 1, 2007, he decided to pass up the constant weight (CWT) event as he felt he had not yet fully recovered.

Yesterday, as CNF announcements were due, William decided to pick a depth which he intuitively felt safe to achieve. Despite his lack of training at depth, he climbed onto the podium after a flawless dive. Former CNF world-record holder William Trubridge had announced the same depth but experienced a surface black out after he completed his dive. Current CNF world-record holder Herbert Nitsch from Austria dove to 77 meters therefore claiming the gold. Bronze goes to Russian champion Alexey Molchanov with 65 meters.

Earlier this year, Winram set an unprecedented dive in the history of freediving by diving the "Arch" in one of the most favourite Egyptian dive spots: the Blue Hole in Dahab. A natural geological occurrence, the Arch is a submerged bottomless passage between the Blue Hole and the rest of the reef at a mere 60 meters of depth, long by 30 meters. Reputed for being a difficult passage in the scuba diver's community, the Arch had only been crossed by a handful of brave freedivers with their fins, the first one being the legendary Umberto Pelizzari. But never in history had it been traversed unaided by extra weight or propulsive equipment. That was until June 1, 2007 when William Winram completed the dive, breaststroking his way down, through the Arch and up, on a single breath.



Winram about to enter the Arch at 60 meters of depth (197 feet) in Dahab's Blue Hole, Egypt.

Former multiple freediving world record holder-turned-photographer Fred Buyle who was present to witness and photograph this momentous feat was quoted "It was the most amazing and terrifying thing to witness how insignificant William was dwarfed by the magnitude of the Arch when he disappeared into it". The dive took 2 minutes and 36 seconds for Winram to complete after which he gave his safety freedivers a clean surface protocol, to indicate he was alright.

Not only excelling in competitive depth disciplines, Winram attended the Indoor Freediving World Championships held in Maribor, Slovenia from July 1 to 8, 2007, where he broke the Pan-American record in the pool discipline of dynamic apnea. With a total distance of 203 meters, he not only became part of the very select group of freedivers that have ever passed the 200-meter distance in competition, it also won him the bronze medal.

After countless national and Pan-American records broken this year, the silver medal won at the recent World Championships nicely wraps up William Winram's competitive year.

He now resumes his pool training to get ready for the next season where, in addition to attending competitions, he will get involved in projects like world-record attempts and diving with tiger- and great white sharks.

A few freediving terms:

Competitive depth disciplines:

Constant weight (CWT), where the freediver descends in deep water on a single breath only aided by the fin(s)'s propulsive power (no pulling on the line allowed)

Constant weight without fins (CNF), same as above, except without any use of propulsive equipment. This discipline is regarded as the purest and most difficult in the sport of freediving

Free immersion (FIM), where the freediver pulls on the dive line down and up

Competitive pool disciplines:

Dynamic apnea (DYN), distance achieved in a pool, underwater, with fin(s)

Dynamic apnea without fins (DNF), same as previous except without fin(s)

Static apnea (STA), time achieved with pure breath-hold, face in the water

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