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Gary Hunt: The Brilliant Brit is eager to star in Budapest

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High diving will be one of the most spectacular disciplines of the 2017 FINA World Championships from 28 to 30 July in a very attractive environment on the banks of the Danube river, right in front of the Hungarian Parliament Building. The favourite of the men's event will be defending champion Gary Hunt, who is a six-time champion at the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series.

Jumping off a 10 meter platform already sounds quite scary for some, but how about doing it from a 27 meter one? That is exactly what competitors of the men's high diving event do.

Gary Hunt is beyond doubt the king of this amazing discipline. The 'Briliant Brit' is the reigning champion in that event at the FINA World Championships, and he has won the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series six times so far. He will be the top favourite at the 2017 FINA World Championships in Budapest as well.

Southampton-born Hunt began diving at age 9 in Leeds, and he proved very talented. He won bronze in the 10m synchro event at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, and he took part in the 2006 European Aquatics Championships as well, where he met Australian diver Steve Black, who invited him to perform at a show in Venice, Italy. He agreed, and dove from an 18m board - Gary considers this as a starting point in his high diving career.



Red Bull cliff diving

'When I was a young diver I wanted to be able to do every dive in the book. This meant learning lots of 'feet first' dives which I liked in particular. As soon as I started high diving it seemed as though the possibilities were endless. I had opened the door to a whole new world of dives to learn and I've never looked back since.' – Hunt said to Bp2017 Media.

He finished his diving career, and after several years of training and competing in high diving events to build up his confidence and technique, he entered the Red Bull Cliff Diving Series in 2009. In his first season, he just missed the first place in overall, tying favourite Orlando Duque on points. The Colombian won the gold medal due to the fact that he had won more individual events over the year.

Despite that Hunt was unstoppable in the following years. He has won the series six times out of seven since 2010!

'Being afraid is just part of being a high diver, dealing with this fear is what separates the men from the boys. I don't think I've met a high diver that doesn't have a 'crash' story to tell. If you're pushing your limits and learning new dives, you're bound to take a hit once in a while.'

High diving debuted at the FINA World Championships in 2013 in Barcelona, where Hunt finished second behind Orlando Duque. Two years later, however, he won the gold medal in Kazan, and his goal is to defend his title in Budapest.

'Diving at the heart of Budapest is going to be fantastic, I just can't wait. To defend your title is always harder than to take it in the first place. I know that there are a lot of divers who want that gold medal, my job is to make sure that I'm more determined and working harder than everyone else.'

The men's high diving competition will take place from 28 to 30 July on the famous Batthány Square in Budapest at the FINA World Championships.

GARY HUNT

Born: Southampton (United Kingdom), 11 June, 1984

Medal record:

High diving, cliff diving:

World champion (2015 Kazan); World silver medallist (2013 Barcelona)

Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series: six-time champion (2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016)

Diving:

Commonwealth Games: bronze medallist (2006 Melbourne, 10 m synchro)