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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Athletes Regina Jaquess, Taylor Garcia Strike Gold As Finals Begin At XVIII Pan American Games

Five athletes combine to earn six medals in respective events

POLK CITY, Fla. – U.S. Pan American Water Ski Team members Regina Jaquess (Santa Rosa Beach, Fla.) and Taylor Garcia (Winter Garden, Fla.) won gold medals and teammates Mary Morgan Howell (Dothan, Ala.), Erika Lang (Gilbert, Ariz.) and Adam Pickos (Santa Rosa Beach, Fla.) each earned medals on Monday at the XVIII Pan American Games at Laguna Bujama in Lima, Peru. Jaquess won gold medals in women’s slalom and jumping, while Garcia won gold in men’s jumping.

Jaquess, 37, won the gold medal in women’s slalom by shattering her own Pan American Games record of 1-1/2 buoys at 41 feet off (set in 2011) with a score of 3 buoys at 41 feet off. She was the only women’s finalist to clear the 39-1/2 off pass. Canada’s Whitney McClintock and Paige Rini earned the silver and bronze medals, scoring 5-1/2 buoys at 39-1/2 feet off and 3 buoys at 38 feet off, respectively. Lang placed sixth (2 buoys at 35 feet off).

Jaquess won the gold medal in women’s jumping with a distance of 171 feet. She clinched the gold on her first attempt – 167 feet – and then upped it to 171 feet on her second attempt. McClintock earned the silver (158 feet) and Chile’s Valentina Gonzalez picked up the bronze (157 feet). She has now won 15 medals in Pan American Games competition, the most among U.S. water ski athletes since the sport became part of the Pan American Games’ program in 1995.

Garcia, 21, competing in his first Pan American Games, won the gold medal in men’s jumping with a distance of 214 feet, just three tenths of a meter over Chile’s Felipe Miranda, who earned the silver medal (213 feet). Canada’s Dorien Llewellyn earned the bronze (207 feet).

Howell earned the silver medal in women’s wakeboarding, scoring 79.78 points. Argentina’s Eugenia De Armas won the gold with 82.67 points and Brazil’s Nep Mariana Ribeiro earned the bronze with 62.22 points. Women’s wakeboarding made its debut at the 2019 Pan American Games. Howell, 16,
qualified for the team after winning the gold medal at the 2018 Pan American Wakeboard Championships in Chapala, Jalisco, Mexico.

Lang, 23, competing in her second Pan American Games after earning the bronze medal in 2015, earned the silver medal in women’s tricks, scoring 9,720 points. Peru’s Natalia Cuglievan, the defending champion, won the gold medal with a new Pan American Games’ record 9,910 points, eclipsing the mark of 9,240 points that Lang set in Sunday’s preliminary round. Rini earned the bronze medal with a score of 8,820 points. Jaquess placed fifth (7,790 points).

Pickos, 27, competing in his second Pan American Games and the defending champion, earned the bronze medal in men’s tricks, scoring 10,140 points. Mexico’s Patricio Font won the gold with 11,370 points and Llewellyn earned the silver with 10,430 points.

In other events, the Dominican Republic’s Robert Pigozzi won the gold medal in men’s slalom, establishing a new Pan American Games record of 2-1/2 buoys at 41 feet off. Canada’s Steven Neveu (2 buoys at 41 feet off) and Mexico’s Carlos Lamadrid (4 buoys at 39-1/2 feet off) earned the silver and bronze, respectively. Garcia placed fifth (3 buoys at 39-1/2 feet off). Pigozzi’s winning score of 2-1/2 buoys at 41 feet off eclipsed the Pan American Games’ record of 2 buoys at 41 feet off shared by U.S. athletes Jon Travers (2011) and Nate Smith (2015).

For water ski results, visit http://www.iwwfed-ea.org/classic/19PER004/. For wakeboard results, visit http://www.iwwfed-ea.org/boatwake/19PER004/.

Tuesday’s action will consist of the men’s and women’s water ski overall events and men’s wakeboarding. Garcia will compete in men’s overall, Jaquess will compete in women’s overall, and Andrew Adkison (Chipley, Fla.) will compete in men’s wakeboarding.

Jay Bennett (Zachary, La.) is the water ski coach, Cathy Williams (Orlando, Fla.) is the wakeboard coach, Scott Greenwood (Little Rock, Ark.) is serving as team leader, and Dr. Brad Harman (Alvarado, Texas) is the team physician.

The Pan American Games take place every four years, in the year preceding the Olympic Games and is the third-largest multi-sport event in the world behind the Summer Olympic and Winter Olympic Games. The U.S. Pan American Water Ski Team has won the medal count at two Pan American Games (1999 and 2003). It tied with Canada for the high count in 1995, while Canada won the high count in 2007, 2011 and 2015.
Water Ski Schedule (Subject to Change)

Tuesday, July 30

10:00 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.  Women’s Overall Slalom
10:40 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  Men’s Overall Slalom
12:00 p.m. – 12:40 p.m.  Women’s Overall Tricks
12:40 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  Men’s Overall Tricks
2:00 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.  Women’s Overall Jump
2:40 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  Men’s Overall Jump
4:00 p.m. – 4:50 p.m.  Men’s Wakeboard Finals (Top 6 From Preliminary Round)

The American Water Ski Association and USA Wakeboard are two of nine sport discipline organizations of USA Water Ski & Wake Sports, which is affiliated with the International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation (world governing body) and is recognized by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee and Pan-American Sports Organization as the national governing body of organized water skiing and wakeboarding in the United States.

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