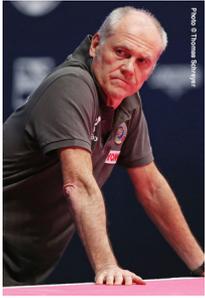


Written by John Crumlish
Friday, 25 October 2019 08:15



Italian women's team coach **Enrico Casella** told IG he never doubted his gymnasts as they pursued and captured the Italian women's first world championships team medal since 1950 in placing third at the World Championships held October 4-13 in Stuttgart.

"I have always believed in the possibility of fighting for a position among the top five teams," said Casella of his team's bronze medal-winning performance, behind gold medalist U.S. and silver medalist Russia. "The medal therefore depended not only on our performance but also on that of the other teams. We also worked psychologically on the girls to make them aware of the possibility of earning a medal. I personally had the certainty of competing for it until the end, after the first rotation on floor."

Casella said he remained confident in a top-three finish even when **Elisa Iorio**, Italy's last competitor in the last rotation, fell off balance beam.

"The pressure on Elisa was obviously very high," he said. "We knew there could be a fall, but not two. So when she fell on the mount, we all suffered a little. But she was superlative in not losing concentration. Her acrobatic series, flic-salto-salto, was amazing and the proof of her solidity."

Casella is equally sure that, at next summer's Olympic Games in Tokyo, his young team can retain their podium finish. In addition to Iorio, the Italian team in Stuttgart included **Desiree Carofiglio**, **Alize D'Amato**, **Asia D'Amato** and **Giorgia Villa**.

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"First of all we must remember that these girls were in their first World Championships," he said. "A little more experience will no doubt be useful. We want to further improve our content and not look at the possible final position of the team in Tokyo. For gold there is nothing to do with this U.S. team. The rest is all possible between five or six teams."

Although 2006 world all-around champion and three-time Olympian **Vanessa Ferrari** did not compete in Stuttgart, Casella, her personal coach, said she is still challenging for a berth to Tokyo one way or another.

"In our plans Vanessa should not be part of the team, but qualify as an individual through the World Cups," he told IG.

Read complete coverage of the 2019 World Championships in the November 2019 issue of *International Gymnast* magazine.

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