

## **FINA 10km MSWC 2008, Overview of Race 3 (Setubal, POR)**

FINA Communication Department

The third race of the FINA 10km Marathon Swimming World Cup series of 2008 took place on June 28 in Setubal, Portugal with the participation of 32 swimmers (12 women and 20 men) representing 14 countries. As reported by FINA delegate Alan M. Clarkson (GBR), race conditions were excellent, with an air temperature of 26-27°C and water temperature of 20°C. The race itself took place in a River Estuary along the coastline in a 2.5km circuit. A small beach that lined the course allowed spectators and coaches to follow the swimmers, cheer them on, and get close to the action.

There were two separate races for the men's and women's field. The men commenced swimming 15 minutes before the women. Both events were good races with no yellow or red flags and no protests. The men's gold went to Valerio Cleri (ITA), who finished cleanly, winning in 1:52:46.80 and beating Thomas Lurz (GER, 1:54:10.95) by about a minute-and-a-half. Russia's Yury Kudinov took bronze in 1:55:12.55 after touching just ahead of Mazen Aziz (EGY, 1:55:12.95).

This win gives Cleri his second gold medal in the 2008 FINA 10km World Cup series, as he also won the first leg in Santos (BRA) on January 26, before taking bronze in leg 2 in Dubai (UAE) on March 15. In Dubai, Cleri was beaten by Lurz, who secured gold on that occasion. Both Cleri and Lurz are among the 25 who will contest the first Olympic 10km marathon swim in Beijing this August.

The dynamic of the women's race were a little more exciting, especially the final stretch. The winner was Ana Marcela Cunha (BRA) with a time of 2:06:04, but three other swimmers, namely the silver and bronze medallists (Angela Maurer (GER) and Andreina Pinto (VEN) respectively), as well as fourth-place finisher Alice Franco (ITA), all finished within seconds of Cunha, posting times of 2:06.08, 2:06.09 and 2:06.10, respectively. All three of the medallists in this race will contest the 10km at the Beijing Olympics and their results here are certainly encouraging in advance of the Games.

The start lists in Setubal were impressive and included many swimmers that will contest this event with the aim of becoming the first Olympic marathon swimming champion, especially in the men's field. For men, future Olympians Allan Do Carmo (BRA), Gilles Rondy (FRA), Arseniy Lavrentyev (POR), Erwin Maldonado (VEN), Mohammed El Zanaty (EGY), and Luis Escobar (MEX) took part, while the women's field included Imelda Martinez (MEX).

The presence of so many superstars of this discipline was only fitting for such an occasion in Setubal, as just before the FINA races, the Portuguese Championships were held with over 140 competitors in different age groups.

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