

## **OWS GP 2010: Romiti doubles, Blaum indomitable in Capri-Napoli meet**

Alberto Fumi, FINA Press Correspondent in Italy

After 18 years, an Argentine swimmer is back to put the seal on the Capri-Napoli 36 km race, sanctioned by FINA as the fifth leg of the Open Water Swimming Grand Prix. The incredible bears the name of Damien Blaum, who thanks to the distance accumulated over his direct follower, Australia's Brendan Capell, was granted a few backstrokes and enjoyed the applause of the audience. "I am delighted and honored by this success – say the winner – now I have entered the golden 'club' of a competition which in the past has witnessed the victories of swimmers like Camerero, Plitt and Degano, athletes that have made open water swimming history."

"Two hours from the finish, I knew I had won and I had given my maximum to create a gap between myself and the other swimmers; now I enjoy the first place in the overall rankings of the Grand Prix," the Argentine giant says.

Third place was awarded to home favourite Andrea Volpini, who is a true Capri-Napoli lover.

"After three hours and a half, four of us detached from the swimmers' pack for the decisive run – says the Italian bronze-medallist –. After a while, I was a few meters away from my sprint fellows."

"I was advised by the members of my staff, especially Napoli-native coach Peppe D'Angelo, to follow the trajectory that would allow me to climb the podium. It is a good result, given the sea conditions in the second part of the race, which certainly did not help," adds Volpini.

Much more uncertain was the women's finish, which saw three athletes contending for victory until the last meters. Alessandra Romiti eventually won the race, repeating her 2007 feat and becoming the first Italina to win two Capri-Napoli editions.

There was nothing left to do for the two other 'sprinters' in the first hour, Pilar Geijo (ARG) and Esther Nunez (ESP), who placed second and third respectively, dominated by the azzurra long-distance swimmer.

"I used my legs, something I usually don't do – says the winner with a smile –. It was my weapon to win the sprint. Before the start, I received a sign. A ladybug settled on my hand; fate was on my side."

---