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## Swimming Day 1 – Sun (CHN) and Ledecky (USA) shine in the 400m free; Sjostrom (SWE) sets 100m free WR

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The start of the swimming competition at the 17<sup>th</sup> FINA World Championships produced fine performances in a packed Duna Arena in Budapest (HUN). In the two individual finals of the day, both Sun Yang (CHN) and Katie Ledecky (USA) confirmed their favourite status, getting their third consecutive titles in the event. The North American star added a new Championships record to her gold and would shine once more in the 4x100m free relay, getting her second success in the Magyar capital and 11<sup>th</sup> world crown since 2013. In a day that saw USA taking three titles out of the four at stake, Sarah Sjostrom (SWE) was the other hero of the session, with a new World Record in the women's 100m free, after leading-off the Swedish 4x100m free relay in 51.71. She also gave excellent indications for the 100m fly, being the fastest of the semis.

### Men's 400m free

In the first final of the day, Sun Yang (CHN) became the second swimmer in the history of the FINA World Championships to win the 400m free crown on three consecutive occasions. After his 2013 and 2015 victories, the Chinese great swam also for the gold in Budapest, in a time of 3:41.38. This was the fastest of his triumphs. Before him, only Ian Thorpe (AUS) had managed the treble, in 1998, 2001 and 2003. Sun perfectly controlled the race and his superiority was clear from the 200m mark. Junior World Record holder Mack Horton, from Australia, earned silver in 3:43.85, bettering his junior global standard. The bronze went to Italy's Gabriele Detti, in 3:43.93. Curiously, this podium had the same athletes than the one at the Rio 2016 Olympics', with a major difference: then, Horton was first and Sun second. Taehwan Park (KOR), winner of the event in 2011, had to content with the fourth place (3:44.38), while James Guy (GBR), silver medallist in Kazan 2015, was only sixth in 3:45.58.

## QUOTES

*SUN Yang (CHN), gold*

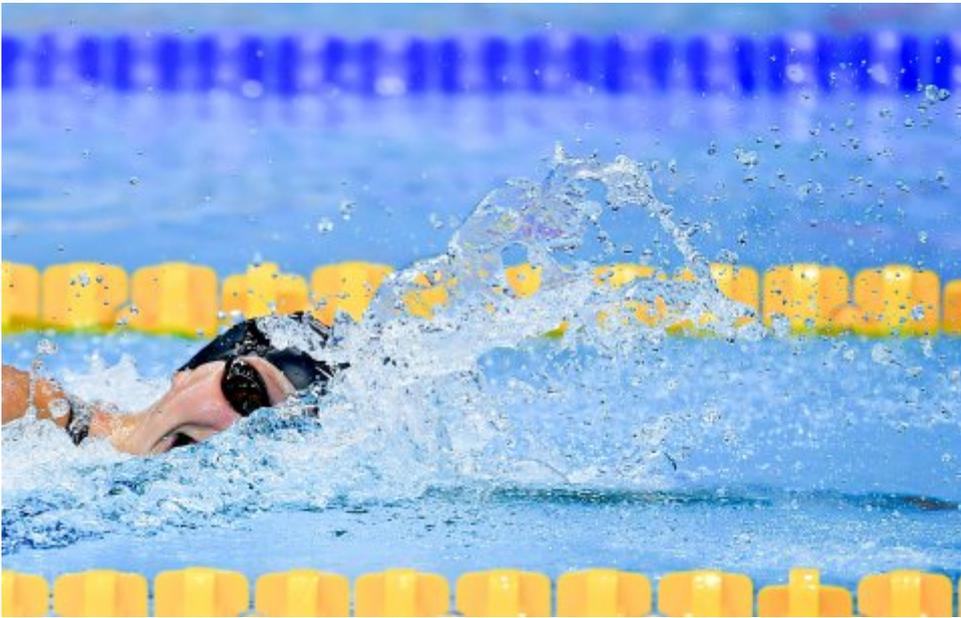
"It is too early to say what is going to happen. I trained a lot and I must admit I am getting older, and suffer some injuries. We will see during the week how it works and I will concentrate on one race after the other"

*HORTON Mack (AUS), silver*

"The biggest disappointment was the time. I wasn't as fast as I can. I need to improve for the next couple of events towards Tokyo. I tried to be stronger in the front end, but I was just too soft, I think. I need to be harder on myself. I need to recover fast to prepare for the 200m tomorrow."

*DETTI Gabriele (ITA), bronze*

"It is my first medal at the World Championships and it makes me happy as I missed the championships 2 years ago, due to injury. Today I tried to catch Nick Horton on the last 50m, but it did not work. In the end, it does not matter, which colour the medal is!"



Katie Ledecky (USA) - Photo by Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

### **Women's 400m free**

After comfortably setting a new Championships Record (3:59.06) in the heats, there weren't many doubts about Katie Ledecky's possibilities of winning the women's 400m free. The US star proved clearly superior than the rest of the field, establishing a new Championships Record in 3:58.34. This excellent performance is however almost two seconds slower than her global mark of 3:56.46, set at the Rio 2016 Olympics. With this triumph, Ledecky is now the only swimmer in the Worlds' history to have won this event on three occasions, and consecutively. Moreover, it is the 10<sup>th</sup> gold for the US great in this competition, out of 10 finals swam. The podium was completed by Leah Smith, also from USA, in 4:01.54, while China's Li Bingjie was third in 4:03.25.

### **QUOTES**

*SMITH Leah (USA), silver*

"It was a really exciting event, especially the start with the marching in! The Hungarian crowd was cheering for the

home competitors, which was awesome! For me, the 400 freestyle is my favourite event, and I am satisfied with the second place as I had not ever swum together with Katie Ledecky in an individual event at the world championships! It was a new experience.”

*LI Bingjie (CHN), bronze*

"It is very nice to win a medal for my very first World Championships! I am not 100% happy, because I did not swim my personal best"

### **Men's 4x100m free**

In an epic race between USA and Brazil, the North Americans managed to get the gold in the men's 4x100m free relay, touching home in 3:10.06. Swimming with a quartet formed by Caeleb Dressel, Townley Haas, Blake Pieroni and Nathan Adrian, the US team left Brazil - the fastest of the heats – with the silver in 3:10.34. The bronze went to the Magyar relay in 3:11.99, with the immense crowd at the Duna Arena loudly cheering for their home heroes. USA has won this race in the first eight editions of the FINA World Championships, but had missed the gold since 2009, when they last triumphed in Rome (ITA). Since then, Australia was the best in 2011, followed by France in 2013 and 2015. For Brazil, this is the second podium presence at the Worlds, after the bronze in 1994, while Hungary gets the first success ever in this race.

### **QUOTES**

*ADRIAN Nathan (USA), gold*

"The French are not here, as a long term opponent of us, but we have the Brazilians, as a new one! I like their relay

and it does not matter how long the distance is to the next one. The main thing is to win and it does not matter if it happens with one hundred or a second!"

"We had a tough trial back home and it was hard to make the top 6. Now I am the captain of a young team but the guys have so much potential."

"Tonight was also a statement of how far American sprinters have come. We don't feel that we are dominating this event. We still have to fight, we still have to swim fast and it is not that easy. We take a lot of pride in how good our team is and how our team is going to perform this week. We were ready to go tonight. We didn't know which country was going to challenge us but we knew it was going to be in the pool."

*DOMINIK Kozma (HUN), bronze*

"They usually say if you get into the world championships finals, everything can happen there. However, we couldn't imagine this for the first time, it is simply amazing. When we started swimming, we felt that it was going to be great and it does not matter how tired we were when we left the pool, we needed to cheer for the others. I do not really know how I will swim 200m after shouting so much... The audience is brilliant! We can hear them cheering even before entering the pool area. This gives us an unbelievably huge momentum."



*4x100 free, USA, gold*

## Women's 4x100m free

In the fourth and final race of the day, the women's 4x100m free relay, Sweden departed quickly, with Sarah Sjöström setting a new World Record in the first leg of the event, in a time of 51.71. The previous global mark in the 100m free had been established by Cate Campbell (AUS) in July 2016, in a time of 52.06. Despite this effort, the Nordic quartet could not make the podium (they were fifth), and the three first positions went to USA (gold in 3:31.72), Australia (silver in 3:32.01) and the Netherlands (bronze in 3:32.64). It was the sixth gold medal for the North Americans in the history of the World Championships – the latest one being the Barcelona 2013 title – and the second title of the day for Katie Ledecky (the third swimmer of the quartet). Australia and Netherlands are used to shine in this event: the Aussies won in 2015 and got the silver in 2013, while the Dutch were third in Barcelona 2013 and second in Kazan 2015.



### *4x100, USA, gold*

In semi-final action, Sarah Sjöström (SWE) is clearly the favourite for the gold in the women's 100m fly, after qualifying first for the decisive race in 55.77. In the men's 100m breast, the decision also seems clear, after the Championships' Record of Adam Peaty (GBR) in 57.75. In the men's 50m fly, five swimmers performed under 23 seconds, in this order: Caeleb Dressel (USA), 22.76; Andrii Govorov (UKR), 22.77; Nicholas Santos (BRA), 22.84; Benjamin Proud (GBR), 22.92; and Joseph Schooling (SGP), 22.93. Finally, in the women's 200m IM, it is evident that the gold will most probably go to local hero and champion Katinka Hosszu, the fastest of the semis in 2:07.14.



*Sarah Sjöström (SWE), WR*

## QUOTES

*COMERFORD Mallory (USA), gold*

"I am just so excited to race here and it is an honour to represent the USA here. This is my first world championships and it has been an amazing experience to swim with these incredible women of that calibre."

"I keep going for my next event this week, for my country, my family and the full Team USA."

*KROMOWIDJOJO Ranomi (NED), bronze*

"We started with our young teammate, Kim Busch, and she made a good job! She was really fast! We had the opinion that if we all swim fast something can happen with the medals! Of course the Swedish team started with Sara Sjoestrom and with world record, so she was just too fast. When I was on, I said, I just need to go and go! I cannot stop, and we can reach something!"

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