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# How Chad le Clos and Laszlo Cseh balance rivalry and friendship

By Jolene Latimer

László Cseh and Chad le Clos are fierce rivals, yes. But also cherished friends.

With each big race, like Wednesday's at Duna Arena, their respect for each other has grown all the more. On Wednesday, it was le Clos the winner in the men's 2017 FINA World Championships men's 200 butterfly, in 1:53.33, Cseh 39-hundredths of a second behind for silver.

The result proved a flip-flop of the result from the 2015 World Championships in Kazan, Russia.

There, Cseh touched first in 1:53.48, le Clos second in 1:53.68.

"Chad was a little bit faster because he's one of the greatest swimmers," Cseh said after Wednesday's race.

"So who can beat me but him?"



*200m butterfly podium, 1. RSA, 2. HUN, 3. JPN*

Le Clos made it clear the feeling is mutual.

“I don’t like losing,” said le Clos.

“But if I have to lose to someone it should be Laszlo.”

The two first met at a South African training camp in 2010. Seven years later, they have forged a relationship that manages to be both competitive and compatible.

*“I was very young,”* le Clos said about meeting Cseh, a veteran who had already medaled in two Olympic Games.

“The one thing that struck me about Laszlo,” le Clos said, “was that he was a champion outside of the water. I took inspiration from that.”

It was something le Clos wanted to become himself: a role model.

Before Wednesday’s racing, the 25-year-old South African said he was nervous. He heard the Duna Arena crowd cheering, and knew the cheers weren’t for him.

The race was in Budapest. Cseh was clearly the crowd favorite. *“I felt like I was at a football stadium,”* said le Clos.

*“That’s a big credit to the Hungarian supporters.”* But he prevailed — and when the gold medal was placed around his neck, he began to cry.

