

Indianapolis, Day 6 - Rikako Ikee of Japan and Michael Andrew of the USA are top swimmers of the FINA World Junior Swimming Championships

Gregory Eggert, Honorary Secretary of the FINA Media Committee (USA)

Rikako Ikee of Japan received the FINA Trophy for the best female swimmer of the meet. She won three individual gold medals in the 50m freestyle and the 50m and 100m butterfly events.

"I did not know there was such a prize.. I was so surprised. I felt it was going to be very hard to carry a big award plaque and going back to Japan. This is my very fast prize awarded abroad, not in Japan. I was surrounded great swimmers and I felt so happy." said Ikee.

Winner of the men's FINA Trophy for top male swimmer of the meet, Andrew won five individual medals in Indianapolis, including three gold, and set three junior world records. He earned gold in the men's 50m back, 50m fly and 50m free, as well bronze in the 50m and 100m breast.

"It's huge. In Singapore, I earned top athlete with only one gold medal and to come here and do it with three individual gold and two bronzes I'm very happy with the improvement. It's an honor to take the award home from my last major junior competition." said Andrew.

On the sixth and final evening of competition the USA won 10 medals to close the junior worlds. The Americans won their first relay gold medal, setting a junior world record performance in the men's 400m medley relay, The USA won 32 total medals, including 12 gold, to top the medal table in Indianapolis. Japan and Hungary were second with 16 total medals, while Canada was second in the gold medal table with seven. Five of these gold medals in relays that included Taylor Ruck and Penny Oleksiak.

Men's 100m Freestyle

Ivan Girev doubled down by winning the gold medal in a new championship meet record, 48.33.

The Russian swimmer set a world junior and championship meet record in the 200m freestyle earlier in the meet.

Hungarian Nandor Nemeth was second to Girev in the 200m and won a second silver medal in the 100m event tonight swimming 48.95. Nemeth won two gold medals as a member of two men's freestyle relays, the 4x200m relay was a world junior and championship meet record.

Matthew Willenbring of the USA arrived .84 of a second behind the Russian champion for the bronze medal. The American was a part of the 4x100m mixed medley relay that earned a silver medal.

Ivan Girev (RUS)

“I will celebrate with my coach tonight. I’m excited I won the race here.”

Women's 200m Breaststroke

Zoe Bartel of the USA captured the first gold medal of the final day of the 6 day program, winning in a time of 2:25.68. American teammate Ella Nelson finished 1.37 seconds behind Bartel, 2:27.04.

Bartel upgraded from the bronze medal won in the 50m breaststroke, while Nelson earned a silver medal for Team USA, her first of the meet. Annabel Guye-Johnson of Great Britain arrived 1.74 of a second behind to secure her first medal of the championships, bronze.

Zoe Bartel (USA)

“I knew going into the race that I felt pretty good in the morning swim, so I knew it would be pretty good at night. Ella and I both going into it were super excited and you know having another girl from team USA right next to you is super motivating... It’s really special.”



Men's 200m Backstroke

Hugo Gonzalez of Spain set another championship meet record winning his third gold medal of the meet. The Spanish junior world champion also won the 100m backstroke and the 400m individual medley earlier in the meet, each were championship meet records.

His 1:56.69 effort tonight was 1.18 faster than silver medallist Carson Foster of the USA.

Foster is the owner of a silver medals the 4x200m relay event. Nikita Tretyakov of Russia finished 2.03 seconds behind the winner from Spain to collect his first medal of the meet, a bronze.

Hugo Gonzalez (ESP)

“Like the other races, I was so excited. I didn’t expect to swim faster than my personal best time. I think this is a great thing that will motivate me for the next year and for the next races

that I can do. I think that I am motivated to pass the junior to the senior.”



Women's 100m Butterfly

Rikako Ikee of Japan swam 57.25, another championships meet record and a noteworthy improvement of the mark of 58.11 she set yesterday, Rebecca Smith of Canada raced for the gold but settled the silver, arriving in another time zone, .82 behind the world junior champion. Japan's Suzuka Hasegawa swam in the jetstream of her teammate, 1.35 seconds behind to deserve the bronze medal. Men's 1500m Freestyle Andrew Abruzzo and Michael Brinegar of the USA delivered the second one-two finish of the evening in longest freestyle event on the program.

Abruzzo's time of 15:06.48 was 2.52 seconds ahead of his teammate. Abruzzo's triple gold medal assault included the 400m and 800m freestyle events while Brinegar's trophy case already includes a bronze medal from the 800m freestyle event. Russia's Iaroslav Potapov swam 15:09.18 for the bronze medal. his first of the meet.

Rikako Ikee (JPN)

"I spoke with my coach that I was going to swim with faster pace from the beginning. My first half was not a faster pace compared with the other swimmers. I also felt that was I not swimming that fast. My recent characteristics of swimming is to get faster pace in second half and I think I could do that way with the final. I got not bad time, so I think I got pretty good confidence for the future."



Men's 1500m Freestyle

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Andrew Abruzzo (USA)

“Going into the race I had a different strategy than I ended up swimming, but sometimes you have to think on the fly. With three laps left, I was like I had a little bit of energy left I want to see what I can do, if it doesn't work, it doesn't work but I might as well try. It was surreal, this is what everyone dreams of – having your teammate right beside you and then both going best times, that's so exciting.”

Women's 50m Freestyle

Rikako Ikee bettered the championship meet record she established yesterday, swimming 24.59. She holds the Japanese national record and also the world junior championship record, 24.48 from her February 2017 performance in Tokyo. USA's Grace Ariola finished .23 behind to capture the silver medal. Japan's medal count profited by a second athlete on the podium, Sayuki Ouchi claimed the bronze medal swimming .48 behind the world junior champion.

Rikako Ikee (JPN)

"In the semi-final, I only swam 0.1 second faster than the next fastest swimmer. I worried about that. Tonight I felt it necessary to swim with my will-power and I was trying to go all out."

Men's 200m Butterfly

Kristof Milak of Hungary is surely going to claim the world junior record in his specialty butterfly event but technically his time of 1:53.79 from the European Junior Championships earlier this summer is slightly faster than tonight's performance. Milak set the world junior record in the 100m butterfly earlier in the meet.

His time of 1:53.87 in tonight's finals obliterated the 4-year-old record set by USA's Andrew Seliskar of the USA in 2013 Dubai.

Milak dominated his competition in the finals. Japan's Yuya Sakamoto was a distant second, more than three seconds behind the Hungarian winner. While the Japanese swimmer earned his first medal, silver, it was the Hungarian's fourth gold medal.

Milak won the 100m butterfly and was a member of his nation's 4x100m and 4x200m freestyle relays.

The Hungarian's one minor medal was a bronze in the 50m butterfly. Antani Ivanov of Bulgaria won his first medal of the championships and the first for his country, swimming 1:57.54 to earn a bronze medal.

Kristof Milak (HUN)

"I tried to make a memorable finish to the season but I have to tell you honestly that I'm not too pleased with my time. I planned to clock around 1:53. To send a message that I can make something similar to the winning time of Chad Le Clos in Budapest. Had someone been capable of coming with me at least over the first hundred, I would have been closer to that mark. But after all I shouldn't be dissatisfied. After the European Junior championships I clocked another time good enough for the 3-4th place of the senior world ranks. The whole summer was just amazing. With the 100m butterfly silver in Budapest, I even stunned myself, now I have five medals here, this is great. The memories of our two relay wins will stay with me and with my teammates forever. Now it's time for some rest but in three-week time the work starts again. I have to continue training as the top is still pretty far away from me."



Men's 50m Breaststroke

Italy's two man wrecking crew of Nicolo Martinenghi and Alessandro Pinzuti claimed the gold and silver medals in 27.10 and 27.19 respectively.

The Italian pair dashed the dreams of USA's Michael Andrew who might have been the man to win all of the 50's of the four strokes. Andrew's time of 27.39 was .29 off the world junior champion. His bronze medal did not offer the same golden shine, but he was the only athlete to each a medal in the 50's of each of the strokes.

Nicolo Martinenghi (ITA)

“It’s my second World Junior Championship I went to Singapore a few years ago and it’s amazing. I like to swim with all the athletes of the world and here in Indianapolis, I love America. After the race, I feel so-so because this year has been a very long year for me, a very happy year, I swim some competition like European, Budapest and here, and some races in Italy. But I am so happy, I won two gold medals and a bronze with my team so it’s all good.”



Women's 200m Freestyle

Taylor Ruck of Canada set a new championship meet record, dropping .79 of a second from her winning time set two summers ago in Singapore.

Ruck swam only .02 of a second faster than silver medalist Ajna Kesely of Hungary.

Taylor Ruck (CAN)

“I thought it was going to be way harder than my other double days but it was actually not that bad. It wasn’t necessarily easy, but all the support from the massage staff to basically everyone, I owe it all to Team Canada.”

Men's 4x100m Medley Relay

The USA squad of Drew Kibler, Reece Whitley, Cody Bybee and Matthew Willenbring took back the world junior and championship meet records that was set by the Russian Federation in 2015 Singapore.

Willenbring's anchor leg of 48.68 brought smiles and cheers to the American team and fans as they watched the Russian men finish just .15 of a second behind.

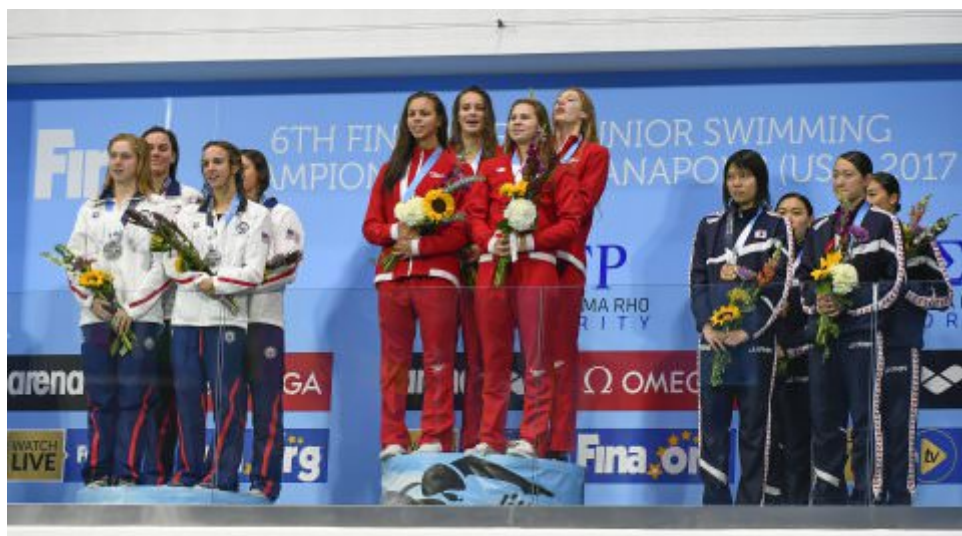
Italy's first three swimmers were charting a winning course after three legs, but their final man was not able to retain the lead and was passed by the American and Russia anchors.

Drew Kibler (USA)

“We’ve been trying to get on the top of the podium this whole week and it’s been a struggle. We’ve had a lot of ups and downs, but the whole theme of this week for Team USA has just been ‘get better, get better.’ When other countries start to lose their energy we just try to keep

building, stay positive and just fight to the end.”

Women's 4x100m Medley Relay



The surprise of the evening was not the flag or the anthem that would be a part of the final medal ceremony. That the new world junior and championships meet record would be won by the Canadian team, again nothing really new. The American's made a race of the relay contest leading after Regan Smith's first leg of 59.11. Zoe Bartel and Lucie Nordmann kept the USA squad in the lead following their speedy splits.

The USA's anchor leg of Grace Ariola was really impressive, a hot 54.25. But the Canadians anchored with Taylor Ruck and she blew the doors off the race, running down Ariola in a blistering split of 52.93 to claim another relay gold medal and record. Jade Hannah led off for the Canadians, and she was followed by Faith Nelson, Penny Oleksiak and Ruck. Oleksiak and Ruck teamed up for five winning relay teams, most of them are now in the world junior record books.

Taylor Ruck (CAN)

"These girls got me really pumped for the relay and I couldn't have done it without them. I'm just happy to share this experience with them."

Faith Nelson (CAN)

"This relay means so much to me. I train with Jade every single day and to have my club teammate on the podium with me and these two girls on the podium with me means so much. I'm really happy we pulled through. It was a hard meet and we knew today was going to be a hard day and everyone was going to be tired, but it was good stuff."

Jade Hannah (CAN)

"It was a great experience all in all, definitely a lot of exposure to things that I haven't experienced before, so having everything like that has been a great experience."
