

## Morozov keeps Le Clos waiting with golden double at SWC Singapore

David Hulmes, FINA Press Correspondent in Singapore

Vladimir Morozov (RUS) struck gold twice to carry the men's series title race to a final day at the FINA/airweave Swimming World Cup in Singapore, on Saturday.

However, the Russian needs to set a world record in Sunday morning's heats to prevent Chad le Clos (RSA) taking the crown off him ahead of Sunday night's finals session.

Katinka Hosszu (HUN) also needs to set a world record in Sunday's heats to have any chance of retaining the title she has held for five years, otherwise it passes to Sarah Sjostrom (SWE).

Morozov went all out to lower his 50.30 world record in the 100m IM in a bid to pick up bonus points and exert some pressure on Le Clos, but touched home in 50.49.



Chad Le Clos (RSA) - Credit by Timothy Tan/SSA

The two title chasers later went head to head in the 50m free, with the Russian stopping the clock at 20.61, and Le Clos back in fifth (21.56).

The South African (1:49.25) had earlier won an epic duel with in-form Daiya Seto (JPN) in the 200m fly, setting a furious pace in the opening 100m, being overtaken by the Japanese at the 150, then producing a storming final 25m to win by almost a second.

Saturday's results mean Morozov is now in pole position in the Beijing-Tokyo-Singapore cluster with 108 points, six ahead of Le Clos, with Seto third on 93.

“I was going for the world record and I was so close — maybe next time,” said Morozov after the 100m IM.

“Overall, I'm very pleased, I'll take it. I still have the Europeans in Copenhagen coming up. I'll go to Moscow for three weeks to work, do a little gym, but it's not much time to prepare. I heard that the World Cup rules are going to change again next year, so it's going to be fun to see what kind of things they come up with.”

Seto arrived in good form, after twice breaking the 400m IM world standard in the past week.

“My plan at 150 is kick, kick, so I could go past, but I was dead, but I'll try again tomorrow in the 200 breast and 200 IM.”

Michael Andrew (USA) had a day to remember, claiming three world junior records — two in the 4x50m IM relay, and the other in the 100m IM behind Morozov, lowering his own mark from 51.86 to 51.65.



Photo by credit by Timothy Tan/SSA

The American team of Trey Freeman, Regan Smith, Alex Walsh and Andrew swam 1:42.38 in the morning, then 1:41.91 in the final for fifth place, with Australia snatching victory from long-time leader Brazil at the death.

“Because I'm 100 IM world champion from 2016 I didn't have to swim in the morning, so I

saved myself for the 50 breast and the relays, and we ended up breaking the record in the morning. We didn't plan on going all out for it and it was a real surprise, but coming into tonight we had a whole new kind of focus," said Andrew.

"We knew I would have to be tested in the relay so I thought if I'm going to be tested no matter what I may as well try to break another world junior record in the 100 IM. It all just felt natural. What really helped me is the way I train — I do a lot of stuff that's real repetitive and power based, so I can do multiple races back to back and my body can sustain a sprint."

Cate Campbell (AUS) delayed Sjostrom's coronation with victory (50.85) in the 100m free, ahead of the Swede (50.99) and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED). Sjostrom — whose World Cup career began in Singapore in 2007 — later finished sixth behind Hosszu and runner-up Emily Seebohm (AUS) in the 200m IM, but still has a healthy lead over the Hungarian in the cluster race.

"I was pretty happy with the 100 freestyle, to be under 51 seconds. It was not a perfect race for me but I'm looking forward to the 50 fly and 200 free tomorrow. I'm confident I'll win this title now — I have a pretty good lead because I broke those world records in the first cluster. Tomorrow is just about doing two more pretty good swims," said Sjostrom.

Seebohm (AUS) (2:01.41) defeated Regan Smith (USA) and Hosszu in the 200m back — a repeat of the result in Tokyo earlier in the week.

In the series standings, Seebohm and Kromowidjojo are involved in a tight scrap for third, with the Dutch speedster holding a slender advantage.

World record-holder Alia Atkinson (JAM) tightened her grip on overall fifth spot with a facile victory in the opening race of the night, the 100m breast. She clocked 1:03.79 and has been beaten only once in the event this season, in Tokyo.

The men's and women's series winners take home \$150,000 each, runners-up \$100,000, and third-place finishers \$50,000, following a prize-money increase announced by FINA in September.

That increase extends to cluster prize-money, which sees the Beijing-Tokyo-Singapore men's and women's winners collect \$50,000 each, with eighth place the last spot to be rewarded (\$3,000).

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