

Hangzhou, Day 3: Prigoda sets new WR in the 200m breast

FINA Communications Department

Two more World Records highlighted the third day of competition at the 14th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m), taking place in Hangzhou (CHN). Kirill Prigoda (RUS) was the individual hero of the session in the men's 200m breaststroke, while the mixed 4x50m medley team from the USA also improved the previous global mark. Other strong moments included the win of Ranomi Kromowidjojo in the women's 100m free (in a new Championships record), and the thrilling duel in the men's 100m fly, where an inspired Chad Le Clos (RSA) won his fourth consecutive gold in this event, beating Caeleb Dressel (USA).



Kirill Prigoda (RUS) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Prigoda established the second individual WR of the Championships in the first final of the evening, the men's 200m breaststroke. The Russian star dominated operations and touched for gold in 2:00.16, improving the previous global mark from Marco Koch (GER), who had clocked 2:00.44 in November 2016. Less than a month later, the German won this race at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Windsor (2:01.21), but this time he couldn't do better than third (2:01.42), still behind Qin Haiyang, from China, silver medallist in 2:01.15. Prigoda's best result before Hangzhou was a bronze in Doha 2014.

In the women's 100m free, Femke Heemskerk (51.84) and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (51.95), both from the Netherlands, had the best qualifying times, but in the end Kromowidjojo was faster and got the gold in 51.14, a new Championships Record. The best previous performance of the meet had been precisely achieved by Heemskerk in Doha 2014, in a time of 51.37. In Hangzhou, she was slightly slower (51.60), but still managed to secure silver, in front of US Mallory Comerford, third in 51.63. The rivalry between the two Dutch swimmers in this event dates back to 2010: Kromowidjojo then won (Heemskerk second); in 2014,

Heemskerk got the gold (Kromowidjojo, bronze); and in 2016, only Kromowidjojo got on the podium (silver).



Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Winner in the last two editions and WR holder, Katinka Hosszu (HUN) was the woman to beat in the women's 200m back, but the Magyar's task was not easy, swimming in lane 1. Despite a strong finish, Hosszu could not even get a medal, finishing fourth in 2:01.99, quite distant from her personal best of 1:59.23. USA did the 1-2, with Lisa Bratton getting the gold in 2:00.71, and her teammate Kathleen Baker earning the silver in 2:00.79. The bronze went to Emily Seebohm (AUS), in a time of 2:01.37. It's the third podium for the Australian in this event, after being second in 2014 and also third in 2016.

In the men's 100m fly, Chad Le Clos (RSA) achieved a rare feat, by winning his fourth consecutive title in the event, in a time of 48.50. Two years ago, in Windsor (CAN), he had set the World Record in 48.08. Caeleb Dressel (USA), the fastest of the semis in 48.93, was never in a position to seriously threaten the South African star and earned silver in 48.71. In third, the home star Li Zhuhao touched for bronze in 49.25. It was Le Clos' second medal in Hangzhou, after the silver in the 200m fly.



Wang Jianjiahe (CHN) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

In a (very) solitary effort, China's Wang Jianjiahe easily won the women's 800m free, in a time of 8:04.35. However, the 16-year-old departed perhaps too fast – until the 350m-mark she was under WR pace -, and could not maintain the rhythm until the end. It soon became evident that she wouldn't approach the world global mark of 7:59.34 (Mireia Belmonte, ESP), but there was still the hope for a Championships record (8:03.41, also by Belmonte in Doha 2014). The minor medals went to Simona Quadarella (ITA, 8:08.03) and to 2016 gold medallist Leah Smith (USA, 8:08.75).

The day concluded with another WR for USA in a relay event. In the mixed 4x50m medley race, the North American quartet (Olivia Smoliga, Michael Andrew, Kelsi Dahlia, Caeleb Dressel) improved their own former best mark of 1:37.17, clocking 1:36.40 in Hangzhou. Still under the old global mark, the team of the Netherlands got the silver in 1:37.05, while Russia had to content with the bronze in 1:37.33.



The US team - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

QUOTES

Kirill Prigoda (RUS) – Gold, men's 200m breast

"When I came out for the 100m (breaststroke), I knew that it would be hard, that it would be a battle. But I probably made the mistake that, in my head, I mentally hung a medal around my neck after the semifinal. I knew that it was wrong to do it, but that's what I did anyway. The 200 is my signature event in short course and I don't know, either I prepared correctly and analysed my mistakes, or I just closed my eyes and replicated how I needed to swim".

"The past year forced me to keep myself on course. I know that this is still not enough. I am determined to continue to work so that I can repeat this sometime in the near future".

“I didn't think about breaking the world record before the competition. When I was standing in front of the pool, my mind was clean and my eyes focused on the water. I just wanted to swim faster and faster. I am happy that my parents were both swimmers and that I am their son. But during the day to day training, I just try to swim fast. I think this is why I am here, why I am in swimming, and why I will be here tomorrow and next year”.

“Competing in the World Cup series helped me to swim faster and better, and helped me to break the world record”.



Lisa Bratton (USA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Lisa Bratton (USA) – Gold, women’s 200m back

"It feels really good. This is my main event [in Hangzhou]. I never swam short course metres before, but it was a fun one. I just wanted to race my typical race plan. I knew the girls around me were going to be out fast. I don't take it out very hard, just race it home".

“It is my first World Short Course Championships, I was nervous. After having to adjust my body from the long travel, I do feel good this week and expected to win a medal. I felt very excited tonight. I took these Championships as an important experience to learn from those big names and to learn how to swim in short course”.

Chad Le Clos (RSA) – Gold, men’s 100m fly

“It was the biggest race of my short course career. I was up against the best field by far and this was the main event of the whole week. I am very grateful I got the gold [as] it was a tough race. I was anxious because I was waiting the whole day for this, the whole week and the past three months because I knew this one could come”.

"I really wanted to race Dressel. He is the best short course yards swimmer and I am the best metres swimmer. It was difficult for him because he had the 50 metres freestyle beforehand. It is a great evening”.

“After the first night, people thought I was winded and I have always told them that is the biggest mistake

they can make because after I have lost I come back much stronger. Tonight was important. I needed the win tonight”.



Chad Le Clos (RSA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Wang Jianjiahe (CHN) – Gold, women’s 800m free

“It is my first gold medal at my first short course World Championships. I was very excited when I stood on the top of the podium. It was a different feeling from what I did during the World Cup meets. I was too nervous and swam too fast in the first part of the race. But I was too tired afterwards. I did one more lap (50 metres) yesterday in the morning heat because I thought the bell should ring at the turn of the last 100m, but in fact it should ring at the last lap. I was confused at that moment. I only realised that when I was at the turn of 1525m and I thought I'd better finish the extra lap. It was a lesson for me”.
