

## FINA's newest swimming competition to launch next month

FINA Communications Department

Next month, from April 27-28, the first meet of the first ever edition of the [FINA Champions Swim Series](#) [1] will inaugurate the three-leg 2019 circuit in Guangzhou, China.

As entry lists are being carefully put together on an invite-only basis, many big swimming names have confirmed their participation and a warm welcome was received for the new top-notch Series so far.

Elite athletes from the five continents are ready to compete in thrilling races, not only setting the pace for the 2019 season, but also defining (or reconfirming) the world hierarchy before two important rendezvous, the 2019 FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR) and the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo (JPN).

The second leg will be held in Budapest (HUN) from May 11-12, while the third and last meet will be staged in Indianapolis (USA) from May 31-June 1.

These three partners in Asia, Europe and America responded “present” when asked by FINA to support this innovative concept, which will lead to the improvement of Swimming’s image and exposure around the globe.

From the organisers’ side, Guangzhou, Budapest and Indianapolis will largely benefit from this additional opportunity to enhance their position of sports cities on the world map. The three Organisers are doing their utmost to provide optimal condition for all Series’ participants. They are solid and long-time FINA partners and they couldn’t miss this opportunity to make history in the sport of Swimming. FINA is carefully following the respective preparations for the event, and is quite confident and optimistic for an excellent outcome.

FINA is conscious of the Aquatics attractiveness in the ever growing and challenging current sports environment. FINA’s disciplines generate a huge interest from the spectators on site, but also from fans, remotely connected worldwide. This is due to the fascination for our Stars, who are constantly giving their best to raise the level in their respective disciplines.

FINA is already recognising the athletes effort, by providing financial support to their participation in our major events, by regularly improving the prize money for the best, and by paying a fair tribute to their performance through our annual “FINA World Aquatics Gala – Soirée des Etoiles”.

The new Champions Swim Series is FINA’s latest innovation to jump into an even more spectacular way to display and present our events. This is the philosophy behind the creation of the event which focuses on the sports presentation with ultimate aim to attract the top-stars of our sports in a competition where “sport” and “entertainment” are the key words.

With a new competition format – only four athletes per race, on a final-only race -, an unprecedented level of prize money and very attractive conditions for participation, this circuit will surely create a milestone in the

Swimming calendar and will very soon become an unmissable competition for our athletes.

Attractive prize money will be paid in each individual race (1st place – US\$ 10'000; 2nd place – US\$ 8'000; 3rd place – US\$ 6'000; 4th place – US\$ 5'000) and in relay competition (1st – US\$ 16'000; 2nd – US\$ 12'000; 3rd – US\$ 8'000; 4th and following – US\$ 2'000). A US\$ 20'000 bonus will be provided for each new World Record established during the competition.

Among the men, Anthony Ervin, from the USA, and reigning Olympic champion in the 50m free, will swim his signature event, while Pieter Timmers (BEL), silver medallist in Rio 2016 will be the man to beat in the 100m free.

Gabriele Detti (ITA, 400m free), Russians Kliment Kolesnikov and Vladimir Morozov, American Ryan Murphy and China's Xu Jiayu will shine in the backstroke races; Brazilians Joao Gomes Junior and Felipe Lima will be strong competitors in the 50m breast; 2016 Olympic champion Dmitry Balandin (KAZ) and 2017 world gold medallist Anton Chupkov (RUS) will have an epic fight in the 200m breast; the best three swimmers at the 2017 Worlds in Budapest: Ben Proud (GBR), Nicholas Santos (BRA) and Andriy Govorov (UKR) – will meet again in the 50m fly, while Chad Le Clos (RSA) will be the protagonist in the 100m fly; Magyar stars Laszlo Cseh and Kristof Milak are serious contenders in the 200m fly; and Chinese ace Wang Shun will highlight the 200m IM.

Other notable participants in the Series include Bruno Fratus (BRA), Danas Rapsys (LTU), Mykhailo Romanchuk (UKR), Ryosuke Irie and Ipppei Watanabe (JPN), Robert Glinta (ROU), and Matt Grevers (USA).

In the women's field, Pernille Blume (DEN, Olympic champion), Sarah Sjöström (SWE, world gold medallist) and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) will certainly set the tone in the 50m free, while Penny Oleksiak (CAN, Rio 2016 winner) and Cate Campbell (AUS) will be forces to be reckoned with in the 100m free. Federica Pellegrini (ITA, 2017 world champion) will be in action in the 200m free and Li Bingjie (CHN) will swim for gold in the 400m free.

In the 50m back, an interesting duel will take place between Etienne Medeiros (BRA, the best at Budapest 2017) and Liu Xiang (CHN); in the 100m and 200m back, Katinka Hosszu (HUN) will be the woman to watch, but in the longer distance she will be closely challenged by Emily Seebohm (AUS) and Kathleen Baker (USA); in the 50m and 100m breast, a trio of US swimmers – Lilly King, Katie Meili and Molly Hannis – is ready to shine (and fight with Russian star Yulia Efimova); Sjöström, Kromowidjojo (both in 50m and 100m), but also Oleksiak, and Kelsi Dahlia and Dana Vollmer (USA), only in 100m, will bring the show in the butterfly events; in the 200m IM, Siobhan O'Connor (GBR), Kathleen Baker and Seoyeong Kim (KOR) will have the difficult task of swimming faster than the Olympic and world champion Hosszu.

Other highlights in the women's competition include Georgia Davies (GBR), Leah Smith (USA), Margherita Panziera (ITA), Wang Jianjiahe (CHN), and Farida Osman (EGY).

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