

## **CSS, Budapest, Day 1: Seebohm, Australian brand of success**

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Fourth, third, fourth. 50m back, 100m back, 200m back. Emily Seebohm, from Australia, will swim in Budapest (HUN) the same three backstroke events than in Guangzhou (CHN), during the first leg of the 2019 “FINA Champions Swim Series”. But in a final of only four swimmers, she is aiming higher in the Magyar capital. “My goal here? To race better than what I did in China, and I don’t think that should be too hard... I came from a very hard training camp with Chad (Le Clos) and Sarah (Sjostrom). It was a tough preparation – almost two weeks there, so Budapest is a kind of test to see where I stand at the moment”.

The 26-year-old Australian (she was born on June 5, 1992) is one of the stars in the Duna Arena with the best roll of honour. She has a career that spans already for over a decade and success was often there, both in the 100m and 200m back, but also helping Australia in getting the top places in the 4x100m medley relay. Her first Olympic gold came precisely in that team race, at the 2008 Beijing Games. She was just 16.



Photo by Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

From that moment on, she went on winning four more Olympic medals (including a silver in the 100m back in London 2012), 14 awards at the FINA World Championships and 10 podium presences at FINA's short course showcase. She is the reigning world champion (50m) in the 200m back, after touching first in 2017 also in this Duna Arena. Two years before, she makes the double, with victories in the 100m and 200m back in Kazan (RUS). Her latest success at this level was her bronze medal at the Hangzhou 2018 FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in the 200m back. Moreover, Seebohm is a strong supporter of the FINA Swimming World Cup, being a regular (and very successful) presence in the circuit.

With such a strong trajectory, she will of course be one of the female swimmers to watch at the 2019 FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR). "Before Korea, I have the Australian Swim Trials for the Worlds in about four weeks, and then I will actually know if I am going to South Korea or not. Then we have a training camp, we go to Japan, and from then to Gwangju".



Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Throughout her career, Seebohm has a basic principle: to look at things as they come, step by step. “Tokyo 2020? For me, it’s this now, I’m focused solely on this. Then, I’ll go home and focus only on the Trials. I am just enjoying Swimming, having fun and being relaxed. That’s how you get your best results!”

The Australian is totally in favour of mixing show and sport in a swimming meet. This being one of the pillars of the “Champions Swim Series”, Seebohm would even like to take this philosophy beyond what is being presently proposed. “If I had to change something? Maybe yes... I would invite each swimmer to do something fun for 30 seconds or so... If they have another passion outside swimming, they could show that. It could be a way to see the other side of the swimmers’ experience”, she suggests.

On a more sportive perspective, the backstroker is quite happy with the competition format of the newest FINA event. “I enjoy the idea that it’s only four people, a one-off race. I think the pressure is less, but it makes it for a more intimate competition. You are in the call room with just three other people, laughing, talking and then getting this very serious mindset for a 30-second race, or one minute. It’s nice, because then you can go home and have dinner with these people also. It’s definitely more friendly than Worlds and Olympics”, Seebohm admits. “It’s quite weird to see only four blocks in the pool. I have many and good memories from Budapest and none of them involves only four blocks. It’s fun, it’s new, it’s exciting it’s the kind of thing we all want to develop and improve on”, she concludes.

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