

Arianna Bridi crowned the ‘Queen of Seychelles’

Colin Hill, FINA Press Correspondent

Arianna Bridi was crowned the ‘Queen of Seychelles’ today, Sunday May 12, as she makes it two years in a row at the [FINA / CNSG Marathon Swim World Series](#) [1], while Marc-Antoine Olivier of France led the pack on a fast and furious last lap to finish in first place in the men’s 10km open water race.

Race Breakdown:

1.6km loop course (6 laps = 10km total)
19 Countries competing
75 athletes in total. 33 Women & 42 Men
Largest Teams Austria, China & Hungary

Women’s Race

Perfect conditions greeted the women for their early morning race start in the beautiful resort of Beau Vallon on Mahe, the largest of the Seychelles islands. Dolphins even joined the swimmers at one point during the race with the water temperature at 29 degrees.

Thirty-three swimmers started racing at 08:00 which was twice as many as last years’ race, a testament to the stunning location and good organisation.

As the race was underway it was clear that some swimmers were swimming tactically in the warm waters, with eventual winner Bridi right at the back of the pack in the early stages.

Bridi (ITA) who was at the back of the group for the first few laps and then went onto win confirmed:

“Yes, I wanted to start at the back and save energy drafting in the pack and then work my way forward when I was ready.”

The Italian team also prepared for the event by arriving ten days early to acclimatize to the conditions.

Lap one

Early in the race Xin Xin from China went to the front of the pack where she stayed for three laps, with other swimmers happy to save some energy for the later stages of the race.

Brazil’s Cunha was always near the front, ready to cover any breakaway attempts. During the fourth lap that the pace really picked up with France’s Muller going to front and Bridi (ITA) having made her way from the back also starting to take up pace making duties as well.

This put the pack under pressure as it stretched out into lap five with many swimmers just not able to cope with the faster pace.

During lap five it was Bridi, Muller, Cunha and Bruni (ITA) all working at the front with more swimmers falling off the pace, leaving only seventeen swimmers in contention.

Lap six, the final lap, saw Cunha and Muller fighting it out at the front and Italian swimmers Bridi and Bruni along with the two French swimmers Muller and Grangeon all in contention until the last 500 meters when Cunha made her move and sprinted for the finish, Bridi went with her and the two were side by side, stroke for stroke right up to the finish:

1st Arianna Bridi (ITA) 2:01:33.9

2nd Ana Marcela Cunha (BRA) 2:01:34.1

3rd Lara Grangeon (FRA) 2:01:41.1

4th Rachele Bruni (ITA) 2:01:41.7

Bridi (ITA) said “This race was very important to me, in Doha [the first leg of the 2019 FINA CNSG Marathon Swim World Series] I didn’t have a very good race, so I was very happy to have a good result today. At the finish, I was next to Ana Marcela and I know she is a real champion and very good at sprinting, so I just had to push & push right till the end”.

Ana Marcela (BRA) said: “I liked the race a lot, last week I swam in the U.S. nationals, so I was a little tired, but at the World Championship I will be swimming in the 5k, 10km and 25km events so it is good preparation.”

Lara Grangeon (FRA) said: “It’s my first podium at a FINA / CNSG Marathon Swim World Series event so I’m really very happy. It was a very good race, the first 5km I stayed with the group and then I worked to the front which was my strategy.”



Men’s Race

Similar to the women’s race you had one of the main contenders sitting right at the back of the pack, with

Ferry Weertman with his distinctive slow stroke rate looking at ease as he bid his time in the early stages.

Russia's Kirill took up early pace making duties at the front of the pack, but Hungary's Rasovszky and Papp were eady to pounce. It wouldn't take long as in lap two Rasovszky went to the front and started to pick up the pace a little.

The lead was then switched between the two Hungarians Rasovszky and Papp then Weertman made his was from the back to the front, obviously his mission was to shake up the pack and lose as many swimmers as possible.

In lap four Ferry turned onto his back to see who would take up the pace, while he settled into the pack for a break.

It was Rasovszky, Sloman (AUS) and then Olivier (FRA) who went to the front and stayed there into lap five. A lot of pressure was now on the pack as it stretched out into a long line with more and more swimmers falling off the pace.

Going into the final lap with the wind picking up, only eleven swimmers were at the front with a lot of Australian Caps in contention (four would place in the top 10) and Olivier really increased the speed.

The splits speak for themselves, the first lap of the race (1.6km/1 mile) in 19:54 and the last lap was 18:24). Olivier was out in front and looked like he was going to hold it, but at the line it was a photo finish for second third and fourth place.

1st Olivier (FRA) 1:56:02.0

2nd Nicholas Sloman (AUS) 1:56:04.1

3rd Kristof Rasovszky (HUN) 1:56:04.3

4th Ferry Weertman (NED) 1:56:04.8

1st place Olivier: "It was difficult with the hot weather, I'm very happy to win. At the finish, I was thinking about my last heat swimming a 100m race and think about the pain in that race. The Seychelles is beautiful and yesterday I enjoyed myself swimming in the sea with many fish."

2nd Place: Sloman (AUS): These hot conditions really suited us Australians and you could see that with where we finished. Coming into the finish line I wondered 'how am I here' with the other top swimmers, but I just put my head down and went for it."

3rd Place Kristof: "It was a tough race! After the third lap the pace picked up and it was hard to save energy for the finish, but I really wanted to get onto the podium, so I raced hard at the end"
