

CSS, Budapest, Day 2: Sjöstrom and Hosszu unstoppable

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The second leg of the newly “FINA Champions Swim Series” concluded this Sunday in the best possible way in Budapest (HUN), with the last 15 races on the programme. It was the opportunity for the brightest stars of the competitions to show an additional glimpse of their glow: Sweden’s Sarah Sjöstrom confirmed the excellent shape (four wins and one silver) of the first leg in Guangzhou (CHN), earning five additional individual gold medals in the “Duna Arena”. The local crowd also had three special reasons to celebrate, with three victories for their home hero Katinka Hosszu. Russian star Yulia Efimova also left Budapest with three victories, in a day that also saw compatriots Anton Chupkov and Evgeny Rylov winning gold. Danas Rapsys, from Lithuania, shone again, Chad Le Clos (RSA) triumphed for the first time, Pieter Timmers, Joao Gomes Jr and Justin Ress honoured Belgium, Brazil and USA, respectively.

The third victory for Sjöstrom (after the 100m free and 100m fly crown in the first day) in the “Duna Arena” was an easy win in the women’s 50m free, where the Swedish star was never in danger, clocking 23.97, in front of 2016 Olympic champion in the distance, Denmark’s Pernille Blume (24.52). In butterfly, Sjöstrom demonstrated the same facility, controlling the 50m dash and clocking 25.32 for the fourth triumph in the Hungarian capital. In the last individual race of the programme (200m free), the Swedish star had to challenge the seven-time world medallist in this event, Italy’s Federica Pellegrini. Despite the fatigue, Sjöstrom could sustain the Italian speed and touch first in 1:56.58. Pellegrini had to content with silver in 1:57.09.



Katinka Hosszu (HUN) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

The first title for Katinka in Budapest came in the 200m butterfly, when the four-time Olympic medallist

managed to win an epic battle with Alys Thomas. The British star dominated operations until the 150m-mark, but the “Iron Lady” accelerated in the last 30m and touched for victory in 2:06.62. Hosszu would shine again some minutes later in the 100m backstroke (reigning Olympic champion), comfortably touching for gold in 59.58. In her pet event, the Magyar great also did not disappoint, earning the third gold of the day in the 200m individual medley – her supremacy was overwhelming taking into account the previous double effort. Her winning time was of 2:08.81, with Seoyeong Kim (KOR) arriving in second in 2:09.97. The last time Hosszu lost a 200m IM race in 50m-pool dates back to the London 2012 Olympics!

Yulia Efimova, already the strongest in the 50m and 200m in the first session, completed the treble in the breaststroke events, winning the 100m race in 1:05.99 and collecting three gold in the “Duna Arena”.



Yulia Efimova (RUS) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

In the men’s 400m free, Danas Rapsys (LTU), already the best in the 200m, started quite fast, touching under World Record pace until the 250m-mark, but could not keep the rhythm until the end, earning gold in 3:43.36. The best global standard in this event dates back to 2009, when Paul Biedermann (GER) clocked 3:40.07.

The first victory for Chad Le Clos in the Magyar capital happened in the 100m fly. The South African ace imposed his pace during the event, and with eight metres to the finish, he turned his head right to control what his main challenger, Hungary’s Kristof Milak, was doing. Seeing he had enough advantage, Le Clos kept the head down until the end, clocking 51.25.



Chad Le Clos (RSA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

In a very interesting duel in the men's 200m breaststroke, Anton Chupkov, 2017 world champion in the event, managed to beat the WR holder Ippei Watanabe (JPN), confirming that the Budapest venue remains a fast pool for the Russian. Chupkov clocked 2:08.23, while the Japanese ace (best global mark in 2:06.67) did 2:08.61. Rio 2016 Olympic champion Dmitriy Balandin (KAZ) had to content with bronze in 2:10.73.

After success in Day 1 in the 100m, Evgeny Rylov was also the fastest in the 200m backstroke, touching home in 1:55.92 – the Russian ace was bronze medallist in Rio 2016, world champion in 2017 and was one of the athletes to watch at the 2018 FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Hangzhou (CHN), when he won seven medals.

Silver medallist in Rio 2016 in this event, Pieter Timmers (BEL) confirmed his credentials and won in Budapest, completing the men's 100m free in 48.32. In the 50m breaststroke, the Brazilian battle between Joao Gomes Jr and Felipe Lima turned out in favour of Gomes, first in 26.64. The men's 50m back also provided a 1-2, this time for the USA, with Justin Ress (24.68) swimming faster than six-time Olympic medallist Matt Grevers (24.88).

The last race of the day - the 4x100m medley mixed relay - consecrated the quartet formed by Anastasia Fesikova (RUS), Katie Meili (USA), Michael Andrew (USA) and Vladimir Morozov (RUS), who won in 3:47.40.



Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi
