

## Doha SWC: Morozov, Rapsys, Hosszu each go 7-for-7 on Day 1

Aimee Berg, FINA Press Correspondent

DOHA – On the first night of the FINA World Cup final in Doha, Qatar, three swimmers had a chance to finish the season with seven wins in seven races. All three succeeded.

Danas Rapsys of Lithuania won his seventh consecutive 400m free, but he was a bit surprised. “I didn’t think it would come!” he said.

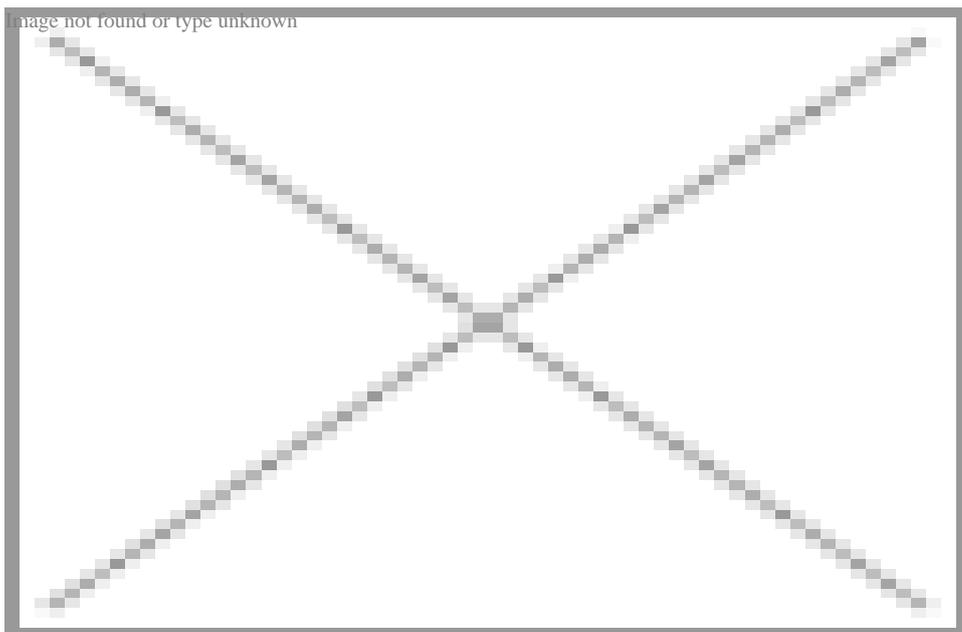
Katinka Hosszu of Hungary prevailed in the 200m butterfly and while she was pleased to be undefeated at the distance, she said winning the overall title would be even sweeter because... “more cash!” referring to the \$150,000 US prize if she can outscore the current points leader, Cate Campbell, by the end of the meet.

Vladimir Morozov of Russia closed the night by winning the 50 free and said it was “the toughest because this is my 110th or 120th race in the last three months. I’m definitely feeling it.”

All told, there were 10 finals on Thursday. In order, here’s what happened:

In the women’s 400-meter freestyle, 18-year-old Austrian Marlene Kahler claimed her first World Cup win in 4:10.51. She said her strategy was to stay near Mikkayla Sheridan of Australia because Sheridan took third at the last stop in Kazan, Russia, while Kahler was fourth. In Doha, they went 1-2, followed by Katja Fain of Slovenia.

In the men’s 400m free, Rapsys had his own Lithuanian cheering section (below) but he didn’t see them until after he won in 3:47.87 – nearly four seconds off the World Cup record he set at the second tour stop in Jinan, China, in August. Mykhailo Romanchuk of Ukraine was second, followed by Jan Micka of the Czech Republic.

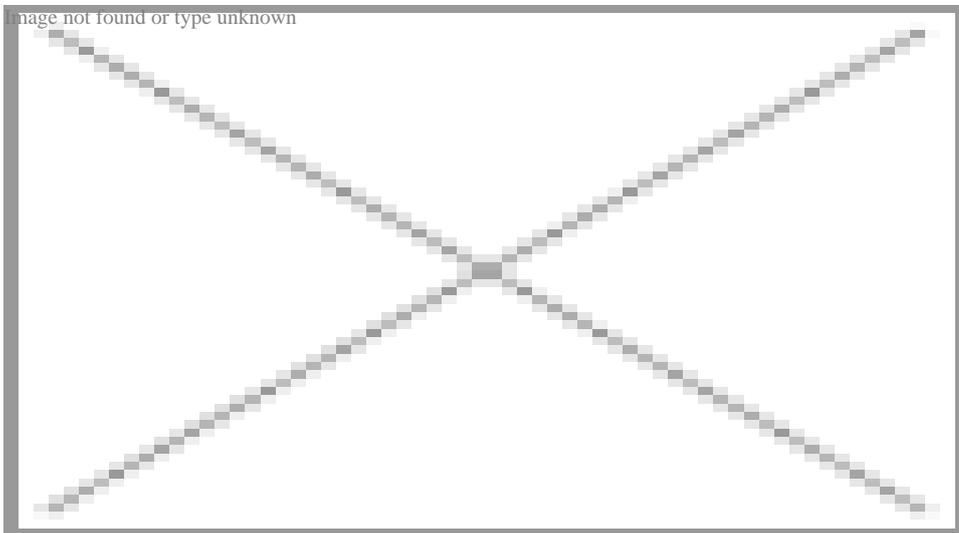


## Lithuania was in the house for Danas Rapsys (c) Qatar Swimming

In the women's 50m backstroke, Kira Toussaint of the Netherlands earned her fourth consecutive World Cup win, in 27.80. Her fast reaction time made the difference. Toussaint's response to the start signal was a full tenth of a second faster of her two nearest competitors, which helped her beat Kaylee McKeown and Emily Seebohm of Australia by .12 and .28 respectively.

In the men's 200m backstroke, Bradley Woodward of Australia captured his first World Cup career win, in the absence of countryman Mitch Larkin who won the first three races of the season. Woodward trains in Sydney; Larkin trains in Brisbane. "My goal tonight was to get out there and race," Woodward said after clocking 1:58.42. Keita Sunama of Japan was second in 1:58.83 followed by Mikita Tsmlyh of Belarus.

Hungary stacked the field in the women's 200m butterfly, placing 1-2-5-8, led by Hosszu and runner-up Zsuzsanna Jakabos who finished in 2:08.60 and 2:08.95, respectively. Meg Bailey of Australia placed third. Afterwards, a relaxed and happy Hosszu said, "I always feel like I need more training after a race, [specifically] more front speed," meaning a faster first split.



## Katinka Hosszu celebrates a 7-peat (c) Qatar Swimming

In the men's 100m butterfly, South Africa's Chad le Clos won handily in 51.70, delighting Qatari fans. "It's really a lucky place for me," he said, surrounded by local autograph seekers. "Doha's my second home. I've been training here for 10 years." For this race, though, le Clos had come from hard training in Turkey. As a result, he said, "I was a little nervous for tonight. On Monday, I did 15.7 kilometers quality work. The first time I've done that in a long time." Although it's the end of the World Cup season, he's already eyeing the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, saying he lost 2.5 kilograms since the 2019 World Championships in Gwangju, South Korea, and his groin injury had fully healed. He shared the podium with Jakub Majerski of Poland, the runner-up in 52.11, and Michael Andrew of the US, who placed third in 52.38.

In the women's 200m breaststroke, 17-year-old Eszter Bikesi of Hungary defeated Vitalina Simonova of Russia by 1.74 seconds, clocking 2:28.24. Bikesi is a breaststroke specialist whose best distance is 200m. And while she does not train with Hosszu at home, Bikesi said, "she is my idol" and that Hosszu told her before her race to finish the last 50 meters strong.

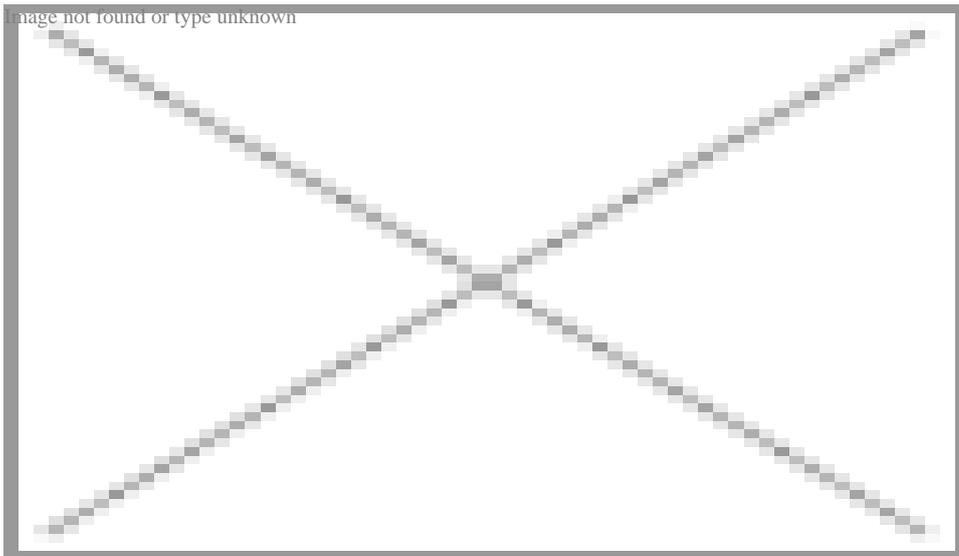
In the men's 100m breaststroke, Yasuhiro Koseki of Japan upset both the runner-up Arno Kamminga of the Netherlands and third-place Anton Chupkov of Russia in a time of 59.11. Kamminga swam 59.25 here after winning this event in Budapest and Berlin in October. Chupkov clocked 59.83 after winning the Kazan stop

earlier this month.

The women's 50m freestyle was a tiebreaker of sorts between Australia's Cate Campbell and Sweden's Michelle Coleman. Each had won the race three times earlier this season. On Thursday, Campbell prevailed in 24.11, just .39 seconds ahead of Coleman. Campbell's younger sister, Bronte, placed third. With the victory, Cate Campbell retained her overall points lead but said, "it definitely wasn't an easy win."

Morozov capped the night with his seventh victory in the men's 50m freestyle as the only man in the field to swim under 22 seconds, finishing in 21.83. Kosuke Matsui of Japan finished second in 22.02 and Michael Andrew of the US placed third in 22.04. "He's on fire," Andrew said of Morozov, adding that "it's good to see because we've all been so busy."

Action will continue Friday night with another 12 finals, including two more in which Hosszu and Morozov will have a chance to remain undefeated: the women's 400 IM and the men's 50m backstroke.



Vladimir Morozov goes 7-for-7 in 50 free (c) Qatar Swimming

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