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OWS GP 2008, Overview of Race 3 (Viedma, ARG)

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The third race of FINA's Open Water Swimming Grand Prix of 2008 was held once again in Argentina; this time in Viedma at the River Negro on February 18, 2008. It was a 15km race, in which swimmers completed six laps of approximately 2.5km each. As reported by FINA delegate Valerijus Belovas (Member of the FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee), 29 swimmers participated: 18 men and 11 women representing 10 countries.

The race started for both men and women at 17:30. The conditions were windy, with an air temperature of 32°Celsius and water temperature of 25°Celsius. Reports indicate the race was very calm, and after one lap a group of 14 swimmers had formed at the front, including two women: Natalia Pankina of Russia, who has already won Races 1 and 2 of the 2008 Grand Prix, as well as Annegret Braun of Germany. Rudolfo Valenti of Italy took an early lead and this formation held steady for about five laps, after which five men started pushing for the finish and Bulgaria's Petar Stoychev, previous winner of Races 1 and 2, overcame his opponents and finished in first place. Following him to the end were Tihomir Ivanchev (BUL), Valenti, Damian Blaum (ARG), and Andrea Volpini (ITA). This group fought hard for the top spots during the last lap and the final metres, but in the end it was the two Italians Volpini and Valenti who took second and third respectively. Pankina finished hard after five laps for the win, while Braun and Marianela Mendoza (ARG) took second and third. At the end of the race the weather deteriorated, and with the appearance of thunder and lightning organisers decided to stop the race. Thus, the positions of the remaining swimmers were fixed.

The Race Director was Claudio Pitt (ARG) and organisers were the Confederacion Argentina de Deportes Acuaticos and the Organising Committee of Viedma. Approximately 4,000-4,500 spectators were on-site for the race and the awards ceremony that followed on the shore of the river. Local newspaper and radio media bodies covered the event. For full results, please consult the FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix 2008 page of the FINA website.
