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Monterrey 2008, Day 5: 3rd individual gold for Sokolova (RUS) & Bell (NZL); Knutson (USA) wins 4th gold (2nd relay)

Camillo Cametti, FINA Press Commission Chairman

The most relevant news from the preliminaries on Day 5 of the 2nd FINA World Junior Swimming Championships taking place in Monterrey from July 8-13, 2008, concern Orinoco Faamausli, the New Zealand swimmer who on Day 4 dominated the 50m freestyle final. This morning he did not swim the 100m freestyle he wanted so much to win and that he would have probably have won seeing that he had set the Championships record in 50.29 swimming the lead-off leg of the 4x100m freestyle relay in the preliminaries of the first day of the Championships. Orinoco was compelled to scratch because of a stomach sickness overnight, which left him in frustration. For the first time no Championships record was set in the preliminaries.

SEMI-FINALS

Italy's Luca Leonardi (1991), Germany's Lucien Hassdenteufel (1990) and India's Virbhawal Vikr (1991) were the 100m freestyle fastest qualifiers: 50.41, 50.46 and 50.49 their respective times. The gap between the first and the 8th qualifier – Crox Acuna (VEN, 1991, 50.75) therefore, is of just 0.34 seconds. Japan's pair Natsuki Akiyama (1991) and Yui Miyamoto set the fastest qualifying times in the women's 100m butterfly, with 59.47 (Championships record) and 1:00.03 respectively. Caroline Mcelhany (USA, 1991) and Silvia Di Pietro (ITA, 1993) set the 3rd and the 4th time, respectively with 1:00.21 and 1:00.39.

France's Elodie Schmitt (1992) was the fastest semi-finalist in the 50m freestyle with 25.91. Canada's Hannah Riordan (1991) was just 0.03 seconds slower, with 25.94, while Kristel Vourna (1992), of Greece, clocked the third qualifying time in 26.03.

In the men's 50m breaststroke, the three fastest semi-finalists were instead Serbia's Caba Siladji (1990), in a Championships record of 28.42, Great Britain's Daniel Sliwinski (1990, 28.55) and Italy's Andrea Toniato (1991, 28.65).

FINALS

Russia's Elena Sokolova completed her sweep of the middle distance events when she conquered her third individual gold medal in the 1500m freestyle, with the time of 16:28.77 a new Championships record, nearly 7 seconds under the previous mark of 16:35.32.

Sokolova was always in the lead, increasing her edge in the last 200 metres thanks to a spectacular change of pace.

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Yuya Horihata (JPN) - *credit: Satiro Sodré*

The silver and the bronze medals were unexpectedly clinched by Kalliopi Araouzou (1991), of Greece, also under the previous record with 16:33.68, and Andreina Pinto (1991) of Venezuela. Pinto had swum her time of 16:36.33 in the morning heat.

Then came the third individual title also for the talented New Zealander Daniel Bell (1990) who won the 50m butterfly in 23.61, improving on his Championships record he had set the day before with 23.77.

Once again he beat Serbia's Ivan Lendjer (1990), who also went under the 24 seconds barrier, clocking a time of 23.97 (which was his personal best by just 0.01 seconds). Belarus' Pavel Sankovich was in third with 24.26. Earlier in the session Bell missed making the 100m freestyle final, swimming his semi-final in 50.99 (10th time).

Grace Loh (1991) of Australia, in a display of overwhelming superiority, clinched the 50m butterfly gold medal with a new Championships record of 28.83. She beat the surprising Brazilian Etiene Medeiros (1991) who, in her turn, managed to clinch silver touching ahead of USA's Elizabeth Pelton by the smallest fraction of a second (0.01): 29.44 and 29.45 their respective times.

Andrew Gemmel (1991), of the United States of America, won the 400m individual medley in 4:21.58. Germany's Jan-David Schepers (1990) was a close second in 4:22.10, while Keita Sameshina of Japan clinched the bronze with the time of 4:29.93, but only after his compatriot Yuya Horihata, who had clocked 4:26.97, was disqualified.

The United States conquered their second title of the day in the last event of the session, the women's 4x100m freestyle relay. Their time of 3:43.54 was a new Championships record. The lead off was Dagny Knutson (1992), who swam her leg in 55.68: thanks to this medal – her second in a relay - she became the most winning swimmer in these Championships, with an overall total of 4 gold medals. The other members of the quartet were Megan Romano (1991, 56.00), Elizabeth Pelton (1993, 56.61) and Samantha Tucker (1991, 55.25). Germany was second in 3:46.63 and Canada third in 3:47.30.

The United States continued their domination among the countries. They are clearly in the lead both in the term of medals (16 overall, 13 of which from the women side) and in term of points (629.50 overall).

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credit: Satiro Sodré
