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Monterrey 2008, Day 3: Bell rings 2nd bell : After winning the 100 back the Kiwi takes gold in the 100 fly

Camillo Cametti, FINA Press Commission Chairman

Italy's Silvia Di Pietro (1993) was fastest in the women's 50m butterfly preliminaries on Day 3 of the FINA World Junior Swimming Championships in Monterrey (MEX), with a time of 26.99. In the semi-finals, in spite of a slow start, she improved her mark to 26.83; the only swimmer to go under 27 seconds and obviously the fastest qualifying time. Both times were FINA World Championships records. In the men's 50m freestyle another Italian, Luca Leonardi (1991), posted the fastest time with 22.66, another Championships record. Curiously the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th qualifiers were, respectively, the surprising Virbhawal Vikr Khade (IND, 1991, 22.69), Orinoco Faamausili (NZL, 1990, 22.71), Oleg Tikhobaev (RUS, 1990, 22.73) and Luca Dotto (ITA, 1990, 22.75). A heated final is easily predictable.

Pavel Sankovich of Belarus clocked the fastest time in the men's 50m backstroke semi-finals with 25.89, followed by Australia's Benjamin Treffers with 25.95, both under the previous Championships record of 26.13.

In the first final of the day, the men's 800m freestyle, South Africa's Heerden Herman (1990) won from lane 2, in 8:01.77. He touched ahead of Poland's Krzysztof Pielowski (1991, 8:02.02) and France's Raoul Shaw (1990, 8:04.71). All medallists swam under the previous World Championships record.

Zuzanna Mazurek (POL, 1991) swam a great race to clearly win the women's 200m backstroke in a great 2:12.56, nearly a second faster than the silver medallist Elizabeth Pelton (USA, 1993, 2:13.53) and 1.50 seconds faster than her compatriot Karolina Urbanska (1992, 2:13.83), bronze medallist. All three medallists swam under the previous Championships record. An emotional Mazurek cried tears of joy when she was awarded the gold medal and listened to the national anthem.

New Zealand's Daniel Bell (1990) dubbed his 100m backstroke win on the 2nd day with another win in the men's 100m butterfly. His time of 52.52 bettered the Championships record he had set in the semi-finals with 52.76. Bell touched just 0.10 seconds ahead of Serbia's Ivan Lendjer (1990), who was in contention for the gold medal until the last stroke. Lendjer is a very fine swimmer himself: his time of 52.62 was also under the previous Championships mark. USA's Timothy Phillips came just behind to clinch the bronze in 52.87.

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Daniel Bell (NZL) - *credit: Satiro Sodré*

Soon after Bell swam in the 50m backstroke semi-finals, missing the final with 26.77 (10th time), which made him unhappy. However, considering that he has not tapered for this meet, his times are really excellent. Bell will have chances to increase his tally here as he has still to swim three races: the 50m fly, the 100m free and the 200m backstroke, one of his favourites, for which he has qualified for the Olympic team. In Beijing he will swim also the 100m backstroke and the backstroke leg in the 4x100m medley relay.

Bell was born in Hastings on May 9th 1990. Currently he trains with the West Auckland Aquatics, under his coach, Ms. Donna Bouzaid. Bell's role models in swimming are both Michael Phelps ("just sensational") and ("as a Kiwi") Danyon Loader.

Two Americans climbed the women's 100m freestyle podium: Samantha Tucker (1991) came in first in 55.59, equalling the Championships record while Megan Romano (1991) was 3rd with 56.32. In between Germany's Silke Lippok clinched the silver medal with 56.08. Tucker was always in the lead and her win was clear-cut.

After three days, and half the programme, with four more medals today, the USA consolidated their leadership in the medal tally by country, with an overall total of 11 (5 gold, 4 silver, 2 bronze). So far 16 countries have won medals. South Africa and France were the new entries of the day (respectively, with a gold and a bronze medal).
