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YOG Singapore 2010, Day 4: After 15 finals, several multi-medallists in evidence

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With China reinforcing its lead of the medal chart at the swimming competition of the first Youth Olympic Games, taking place in Singapore, some preliminary conclusions can be taken regarding the athletes to watch for the future. In fact, after 15 finals contested, many multi-medallists are proving their potential and many of them will certainly be a “card to play” in future editions of FINA World Championships and Olympic Games. Among men, the star so far is South Africa’s Chad Le Clos. In the third session of finals, he managed to earn two more medals, this time the silver in the 100m butterfly and the bronze in the 4x100m free relay. His collection is now of four awards, after his silver in the 400m free and the gold in the 200m individual medley.

No other male competitor is close to Le Clos: next one in this “informal” ranking is China’s Jianbin He, with three medals: gold in the 100m backstroke and 4x100m free relay mixed, and silver in the 4x100m free relay. Seven more boys now have two medals in their pockets: Andrey Ushakov (RUS) – gold in the 200m free and 4x100m free relay; Cristian Quintero (VEN) – silver in the 200m free and bronze in the 400m free; Jun Dai (CHN) – gold in the 400m free and silver in the 4x100m free relay; Anton Lobanov (RUS) – gold in the 4x100m free relay and silver in the 100m breaststroke; Kenneth To (AUS) – silver in the 200m individual medley and 4x100m free relay mixed; Dylan Bosch (RSA) – bronze in the 200m individual medley and 4x100m free relay; Bower Sun (CHN) – gold in the 4x100m free relay mixed and silver in the 4x100m free relay.

In the women’s field, the most successful swimmer so far is Australia’s Emma McKeon, with three awards: gold in the 4x100m medley relay, silver in the 100m free and 4x100m free relay mixed. Eight girls share the honour of having medalled twice: Yi Tang (CHN) – gold in the 100m free and 4x100m free relay mixed; Daryna Zevina (UKR) – gold in the 100m backstroke and bronze in the 200m backstroke; Anqi Bai (CHN) – gold in the 200m backstroke and silver in the 100m backstroke; Alexandra Papusha (RUS) – silver in the 4x100m medley relay and bronze in the 100m backstroke; Kaitlyn Jones (USA) – gold in the 200m individual medley and silver in the 200m backstroke; Lan Liu (CHN) – gold in the 4x100m free relay mixed and bronze in the 200m butterfly; Kristina Kochetkova (RUS) – silver in the 200m individual medley and 4x100m medley relay; Madison Wilson (AUS) – gold in the 4x100m medley relay and silver in the 4x100m free relay mixed.



Yi Tang (CHN) - credit: SPH-Syogoc/Mugilan Rajasegeran

In the third day of finals, the most interesting result was the win of Yi Tang (CHN) in the women's 100m freestyle, with the time of 54.46. The Chinese was always in control of the race, and left her main contenders far behind: Emma McKeon (AUS) was second in 55.37, while the bronze went to Lauren Earp (CAN) in 56.59. "I didn't expect to win gold because Emma (McKeon) was the real favourite," Tang said. "This is a big boost after our disappointment yesterday over the relay [4x100m medley] disqualification." China's second gold medal of the day – the Asian delegation dominates the medal chart with five gold, two silver and one bronze medal – was earned by Anqi Bai in the women's 200m backstroke (2:11.46). Kaitlyn Jones (USA) managed to be in the lead until the 100m-mark, but Bai final effort paid off; the American finished second in 2:12.20, closely followed by Daryna Zevina (UKR), who made an incredible final 50m in 32.47 (for a global time of 2:12.31).

In the men's 100m butterfly, Le Clos (RSA) had a bad reaction time (0.83, the slowest), being only fifth in the turn. The first, then, was France's Medhy Metella, who visibly didn't manage so well his effort and finished seventh. The more regular of the race was Korea's Gyucheol Chang, second at the 50m-mark and winner in 53.13. Le Clos was second (53.31), while Serbia's Velimir Stjepanovic got the bronze in 53.77. "I didn't guess that I could get gold," Chang said. "I thought I could not give up, just get to the finish line," he added.



Gyucheol Chang (KOR) - credit: SPH-Syogoc/Jeremy Chan

The last race of the day was perhaps the most thrilling one, with Russia triumphing in the 4x100m free relay. With a very poor start by Andrey Ushakov (only fourth), the Europeans then recovered and touched home in 3:23.91. Incredible was the performance of China: only fifth after the third man, Jianbin He then swims the last 100m in a very fast 49.41 and gets the silver for his team (3:24.46). The ones losing with this “super-rocket” were the South Africans, comfortably in second before the last man and arriving in third at the end of the race (3:24.66).

Singapore Sports School, an example

The venue where the Swimming events are being held at these Youth Olympic Games is the Singapore Sports School (SSS). About 35km away from the city centre, this enormous complex is an example of perfect integration between sport and education.

Besides the academic programme, the SSS also offers superb infrastructures: two Olympic-sized pools (that can be used with any weather condition, as they are covered on three sides – the fourth, open, gives to a highway surrounded by a forest), 10 badminton courts, a tennis table centre (with a 32-table capacity), an indoor shooting facility, a 12-lane bowling centre, an eight-lane synthetic rubber running track, a soccer field, three netball courts, and a two-storey gymnasium. The Sports branch of the School comprises nine academies, a science department, and a talent and identification programme.

The swimming facilities host every year one of the legs of the FINA/ARENA Swimming World Cup (the main pool is

transformed into a 25m one) and was naturally the pool used for the last edition of the Youth Asian Games. The complex has a 300-people stand capacity, but an additional 700 seats can be built for bigger competitions, as it is the case with the YOG.



Singapore Sports School - *credit: Pedro Adrega*

The project started in 2004, and since then, on the nine sports available (badminton, bowling, golf, netball, sailing, soccer, swimming, table tennis and track & field), the School achieved five world championship titles, sent two athletes to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, had two Asian Games gold medallists, and has 121 students attending several open national championships in Singapore. Some of these young talents are also competing at the Youth Olympic Games.

Quotes of the day

"It hasn't hit me that I won the first one yet, so I'm having a little fun. Coming home to my family and friends with two

– Kaitlyn Jones (USA)

"I was very upset about yesterday's race and (winning only) the silver medal. I didn't expect to win today because I do not

compete in an individual freestyle event. I phoned my parents yesterday and when I said I didn't win (the breaststroke final),

they were very upset. That made me angry and gave me the power to perform well today." – Anton Lobanov (RUS), winner

of the 4x100m free relay and silver medallist in the 100m breaststroke

"We swim in the open river. This is my first time in a pool." – Liberia's swimmer Mika-Jah Teah

"I think swimming in front of a home crowd is amazing. It means a lot to a swimmer if the home crowd is cheering. We know

that there are people supporting us, so we can use that energy to finish (the race)." – Swimmer Lim Xiang Qi Amanda,

from Singapore

"I never actually liked it as a child. My parents forced me to swim and I wasn't very good as a child." - Martina Carraro

(ITA), silver medallist in the women's 50m breaststroke
