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Open Water, Day 5: Thomas Lurz wins 25km, his second gold and fourth in Barcelona

Greg Eggert, FINA Press Commission Member

Germany's Thomas Lurz, 33 years old, won his first title in the 25km event to become the only male swimmer to have won a gold medal in every open water discipline. "I'm really satisfied with this gold. Now I have been at the top of the podium at every distance in the open water world championships," said the swimmer, who raced a total of 45km, winning a medal in each of four open water events in the last seven days. Brian Ryckeman of Belgium finished four tenths of a second behind the German swimmer. Russia's Evgeniy Drattcev earned a bronze medal. Russia has won a record 16 world championship medals in 16 editions of FINA open water swimming championships.

Lurz finished third on Saturday in the 5km, an upset of sorts in that Lurz had not lost that event since his first victory in the FINA World Championships in Montreal eight years ago. Lurz had never won a medal in the 25km event having dominated the 5km distance winning seven consecutive world gold medals from 2005 to 2011. Lurz finished second in the 2012 London Olympic Games in the 10km Olympic Swim Marathon improving on his bronze medal from the 2008 Beijing Olympics in the inaugural 10km event. He is the only athlete to have won an open water medal in two Olympic Games.

On Monday of this week Lurz finished less than 3 seconds behind Spyridon Gianniotis of Greece in the Olympic distance. On Thursday he was a member of the three person German squad that won a gold medal in the 5km team event in Barcelona's Moll de la Fusta harbour.

Lurz is the only the second man to win this race in a time under five hours. He finished in 4:46.27.0. Yuri Kudinov of Russia was the first to break five hours swimming 4:55:51.12 in 2000 when he won the first of his five titles in the event.

{youtube}78pMILesjYc{/youtube}

QUOTES:

Gold medal winner: Thomas Lurz (GER)

"I'm really satisfied, I have got medals in 5km, 10km, the 5km Team Event and today the 25km. These championships have been great for me."

"I was a little bit lucky to touch first because we were all together and it is the person that has the better line and who can swim alone while other guys are pushing against each other that can arrive first. I was lucky to be in the middle and I had a little bit of space. Touching first was very good for me. I closed my eyes for the last 100m, I was hurting, I had so much pain but I said 'now I give it my best'.

Silver medal winner: Brian Ryckeman (BEL)

"It was a good race. The water was the perfect temperature. I felt strong but I was too soon at the front so at the end I was a little bit tired. I'm really happy for my first medal at the FINA World Championships. I have been 4th, 5th, 6th and many times 7th place before including in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, but I have not been on the podium at a world championships.

"As I got out of the water I needed to lay down. Since I was swimming horizontally for 5 hours all of the blood was in my legs and I was not able to stand up. I needed time to recover but I am fine now."

Bronze medal winner: Evgenii Drattcev (RUS)

"It was my first race at the 25km distance. I decided to swim near Thomas Lurz because I knew that he would not make mistakes. I was happy that the race was easier than I thought it would be and I did everything like it was planned. I wanted to get this medal because I didn't have good luck in the 5km. All of the places were decided at the finish which was close."
