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Published on *fina.org* - Official FINA website (<https://www.fina.org>)

Swimming, Day 5 - Women's 200m butterfly: Zige Liu (CHN) earns first gold at Worlds

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2008 Olympic champion in this event, China's Zige Liu got her first title at FINA World Championships, by convincingly winning in 2:04.59, the best performance of the year, but still far from her World Record performance, established in October 2009 in a time of 2:01.81. It was a very interesting duel with local hero Mireia Belmonte, fighting until the end for the victory: in the end, the Iberian swimmer got the silver in 2:04.78, while the bronze went to Katinka Hosszu, from Hungary, in 2:05.59. Zige has now one medal of each colour in the event, after taking silver in 2009 (behind Australia's Jessicah Schipper) and bronze in 2011 (an event won by her teammate Liuyang Jiao, the 2012 Olympic champion). Jiao, also competing in the final in Barcelona, could not do better than sixth, in 2:06.65.

For Belmonte, who got two silver medals at the London Olympics in the 800m free and precisely in the 200m butterfly, this runner-up placing is the second success in the Palau Sant Jordi, after the bronze in the 200m IM. Hosszu, the best in the 200m IM in the Catalan capital, gets her second podium presence at the Championships and her fifth overall medal at this level.

World Record: Zige Liu (CHN), 2:01.81 – October 21, 2009 in Jinan (CHN)

Championships Record: Jessicah Schipper (AUS), 2:03.41 – July 30, 2009 in Rome (ITA)

Best performance of the current season (since January 2013): Zige Liu (CHN), 2:04.59 – August 1, in Barcelona (ESP)

2003-2011 winners in this event: 2003 – Otylia Jędrzejczak (POL, 2:07.56); 2005 – Otylia Jędrzejczak (POL, 2:05.61);
2007 – Jessicah Schipper (AUS, 2:06.39); 2009 – Jessicah Schipper (AUS, 2:03.41); 2011 – Liuyang Jiao (CHN, 2:05.55)

The best in this event (1. most victories or 2. fastest time): Rosemarie Kother (GDR, 1973 & 1975), Otylia Jędrzejczak (POL, 2003 & 2005) and Jessicah Schipper (AUS, 2007 & 2009)

2012 Olympic podium: 1. Liuyang Jiao (CHN, 2:04.06), 2. Mireia Belmonte (ESP, 2:05.25), 3. Natsumi Hoshi (JPN, 2:05.48)

{youtube}JFY3Pw5XcjA{/youtube}

QUOTES:

Gold medal winner: Zige Liu (CHN)

"I was not in a good situation after the Beijing Olympics and before these Championships. I had some health problems. Now I'm back to a high level again. I'm very happy and satisfied with this gold."

"I also understood why I could not perform well so I did some changes and I saw the result in training. Now my performances are much better."

Silver medal winner: Mireia Belmonte Garcia (ESP)

"I can't be happier after that race. The Chinese are really good swimmers, you never know what they will do. Now I've got to recover for the races I have left. I got the medal in London exactly one year ago. Getting a silver medal in Barcelona today is the best celebration ever. I felt very supported by the crowd."

Bronze medal winner: Katinka Hosszu (HUN)

"After winning the 200IM, I told myself that whatever happens after is bonus."

"Going into this meet, my whole preparation was different. After the Olympics I went back to Hungary to represent my country, I changed my coach, racing and training more than before and the hard work definitely paid off."
