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## Swimming World Juniors, Day 3: A must-see performance: the Mackenzie Horton Show

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DUBAI (United Arab Emirates), 28 August – Three days, three individual gold medals, plus two in the relays: Mackenzie Horton got something back from faith after the 17 year-old Australian missed the cut for the FINA World Championships by a fingernail earlier this year. In Dubai, he won the 200m, 400m and 800m crowns so far, all in Championship Record time. Besides his shining, Day 3 saw 7 more CRs bettered. Two Championship Records were already broken in the morning heats:

credits went to two Russians, Evgeny Sedov (50m free) and Svetlana Chimrova (50m back). Chimrova further bettered her record in the semis, while Sedov's CR fell to Luke Percy (AUS) in the afternoon.

The first final of Day 3 brought another Championship Record: Kylie Stewart (USA) won the girls 200m backstroke with ease. She turned first at the halfway mark and didn't look back – her 2:09.74min effort would have been enough for the 7th place at the FINA World Championships in Barcelona. It was a 1-2 finish for the US as Kathleen Baker clinched the silver, her second in Dubai as she had one from the 100m event. The 100m champion, Daria Ustinova (RUS) – just 15 years old – this time came third.

The boys 100m fly provided some extraordinary scenes. Takaya Yasue (JPN) won Japan's first gold medal in Dubai: it was a brilliant race from Yausa who swam on lane 7, and reached the wall in the best rhythm possible. The golden touch secured him a win of 0.16sec margin, ahead of Pedro Vieira (BRA). The two best flyers of the semis, Justin Lynch and Matthew Josa, both from the USA, shared the bronze medal, to the joy of their team-mates on the tribune. Though Josa might have been a bit frustrated: had he come up with the same 52.96 effort he clocked in the semis, he would have won the title.



Siobhan Bernade Haughey (HKG) - credit: *Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia*

Ruta Meilutyte (LTU) was beaten. No, not in breaststroke, so it wasn't an upset – she finished runner-up in the girls 100m free final. But to the surprise of many, the golden effort didn't come from the US or Australian sprinters: the title went to Siobhan Bernade Haughey (HKG), who smashed the Championship Record (54.47 – would have been enough to earn a spot in the final in Barcelona) and scored an amazingly clear win over Meilutyte, building a gap of almost half a second.

The boys' 800m free brought another Mackenzie Horton Show: Australia's future mid- and long-distance ace earned his third gold medal in three days. After winning the 400m and 200m titles, he added the 800m crown to his tally. His time of 7:45.67 – new CR of course – would have placed him 5th in Barcelona!

“I've just wanted to record times competitive with those clocked at the World Championships” Horton said in the mixed zone. “I missed Barcelona by a fraction, a really small amount... But I try not to think of it, staying cool and I'm really satisfied with what I've achieved so far here.”

Asked about whether he is the next great Aussie king of the distance, he smiled: “Oh, that's a big call... There are huge shoes to fill... I don't know...” And laughed. Then he left the Mixed Zone, took a common pic with some local kids, had a look at the giant photo on the wall, featuring Sun Yang (CHN), the current senior emperor of the events in which Horton excelled here – and walked away. Perhaps in a decade he will also deserve to have a poster...



4x100m mixed free relay winners: Georgia Miller, Shayna Jack, Regan Leong & Luke Percy (AUS) - *credit: Giorgio*

*Scala/Deepbluemia*

The mixed free relay concluded the day and the event was a great tactical battle. All eight quartets started with boys, and four put a boy for the second leg as well. Finally these clinched four of the first five places. Among the top finishers only the US relay had girls for the middle two spots and trusted in Caessen Dressler's strong finish again. However the 7 seconds they trailed against the Aussies at the 300m turn proved to be too much for Dressler. He provided his third sub-49sec anchor leg in three days, passed the Russians, the Canadians and the Germans, but Georgia Miller (AUS) managed to keep 0.72sec from their advantage. Since Horton swam in the heats for Australia, he is also considered gold medallist, so he has five titles – and counting...

### **Medallists, Day 3**

Boys 800m free

1. Mackenzie Horton AUS 7:45.67 CR
2. Jan Micka CZE 7:56.33
3. Pawel Furtek POL 7:58.33

### **Boys 100m fly**

1. Takaya Yasue JPN 53.01
2. Pedro Vieira BRA 53.17
3. Justin Lynch USA 53.27
3. Matthew Josa USA 53.27

### **Girls 100m free**

1. Siobhan B. Haughey HKG 54.47 CR
2. Ruta Meilutyte LTU 54.94
3. Shayna Jack AUS 55.23

### **Girls 200m back**

1. Kylie Stewart USA 2:09.74 CR
2. Kathleen Baker USA 2:10.68
3. Daria Ustinova RUS 2:10.79

### **4x100m mixed free relay**

1. Australia 3:28.47 CR

(Luke Percy, Regan Leong, Shayna Jack, Georgia Miller)

2. United States 3:29.56

(Paul Powers, Cierra Runge, Mary Schneider, Caeleb Drassler)

3. Russia 3:29.93

(Evgeny Sedov, Ivan Kuzmenko, Rozaliya Nasretdinova, Mariia Baklakova)

### **Championship Records in the heats and semis:**

Boys 50m free

Evgeny Sedov RUS – heats: 22.13

Luke Percy AUS – semis: 22.11

### **Girls 50m fly**

Svetlana Chimrova RUS – heats: 26.62

Svetlana Chimrova RUS – semis: 26.40

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