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SWC 2013, Dubai Day 1: Le Clos rattles WR in 200 fly, Hosszu picks up five medals

FINA Communication Department

One of the biggest crowds seen at a swimming event in Dubai since the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in 2010 flocked to the Hamdan Sports Complex tonight to witness the world's best swimmers in action, and they did not leave disappointed. The action kicked off with Spain's Mireia Belmonte Garcia continuing her winning form from the Moscow leg of the series conducted last weekend, with victory in the 800m freestyle.

Belmonte, who was swimmer of the meet here in Dubai at the 2010 World Championships, touched in 8:14.12, just ahead of compatriot Melanie Costa (8:16.55), with Germany's Sarah Kohler (8:18.90) in third. Hungarian Katinka Hosszu, having dominated the heats this morning and qualifying fastest in four of her five heats, did not have the perfect start she was hoping for, having to settle for fifth.

Belmonte was happy with the result, saying: "Doing the World Cup is a good experience, the racing really helps. I am happy to be back in Dubai again and to win this race."

In the second event of the packed programme, Tunisia's Oussama Mellouli had to settle for silver (4:08.76) in the 400m IM, behind Hungarian David Verraszto (4:05.30). Travis Mahoney (4:11.07) of Australia was third. Mahoney was pleased with his swim, given that he had just been at an altitude training camp and was coming straight from the camp into competition.

The men's 100m freestyle produced a great tussle as adversaries Vladimir Morozov of Russia (45.84) just touched out the American Anthony Ervin (46.88) with Australia's Kenneth To in third (47.01). This is the third victory in this event in a row for Morozov, who also took the gold in the Berlin and Moscow legs of the World Cup.



Vladimir Morozov (RUS) during the 100m freestyle final - *credit: Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia*

"I'm happy with that, I like short course and I like competing against these guys", said Morozov.

Post-race, To said: "I went out a little too slow, but I'm enjoying the racing, the high caliber of competitors makes it really exciting."

To was delighted to later turn the tables on Morozov, winning the 100m IM in 51.64, with Morozov in 51.76 and Trinidad and Tobago's George Bovell in third in 52:38.

After a very short rest after the 800m Hosszu was back in the pool for the 200m freestyle, and managed to hold off a strong field to take the gold in 1:53.21. The Netherland's Femke Heemskerk touched second in 1:53.46, with Melanie Costa (1:53.90) also backing up after the 800m to take the bronze to go with her 800m silver.

Roland Schoeman took his fourth gold in a row in the men's 50m breaststroke in this year's World Cup series, finishing in 25.96, almost a second faster than Hendrik Feldwehr of Germany (26.95), with Japan's Shioura Shinri in third (27.38).



Roland Schoeman (RSA) - credit: Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemedial

Schoeman's night improved though, as he went on to win the 50m butterfly (22.27) ahead of crowd favourite Chad Le Clos (22.28) with Thomas Shields in third (23.02). Le Clos was disappointed to miss the gold by the smallest of margins, but still took some satisfaction from his brilliant swim earlier in the 200m butterfly where he thrilled the crowds, only just missing the world record by .03 of a second, finishing in 1:49.07. Pawel Korzeniowski of Poland finished second in 1:51.26, with Frederico Veloso De Castro of Brazil in third (1:54.91).

Le Clos said: "I'm disappointed to miss the record but happy that I did two splits under it. Sometimes you get them, sometimes you don't. I just have to keep racing hard. I'm not sure about a world record for tomorrow, but I always try to do my best."

In the women's 100m breaststroke Jamaica's Alia Atkinson managed to turn the tables on Russia's Iuliia Efimova after going down to her in Moscow, taking gold in 1:02.91, ahead of Efimova in 1:04.00. Atkinson was happy to be back on top of the podium, having taken gold in the same event in Eindhoven.

"I'm enjoying the rivalry with Iuliia, and the series is great. I try not to put too much pressure on myself throughout the series, and just learn from it", said Atkinson.



Alia Atkinson (JAM) - credit: Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia

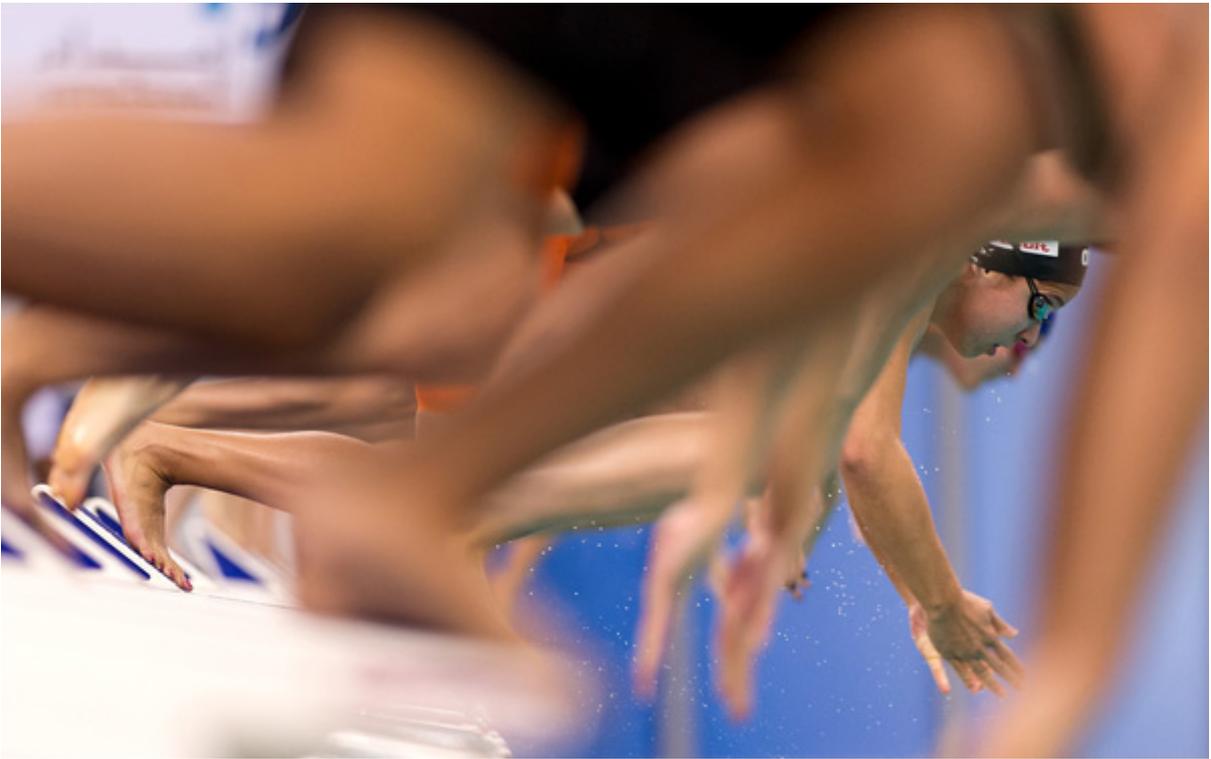
Hosszu backed up again for the next event, the women's 100m butterfly, but was pipped by current 50m butterfly World Champion (long course) champion Jeanette Ottesen Gray of Denmark (56.47). Hosszu touched second in 56.87, with Singapore's Tao Li in third (57.23).

In her next race Hosszu took the top spot on the podium again, leading throughout the 200m IM to finish in 2:06.58, ahead of Emily Seebohm of Australia (2:08.43), with Evelyn Verraszto of Hungary in third (2:08.85). A dead heat for third in Hosszu's next race, the 50m backstroke, ensured she finished on the podium on all but one race of her six for the evening. Poland's Aleksandra Urbanczyk touched first in 26.70, with Emily Seebohm again taking silver (26.93), while Hosszu tied for third with Ukraine's Daryna Zevina, both finishing in 27.13.

Zevina, who took all three backstroke golds in Russia, was disappointed but said: "I will show you what I can do in the next race." True to her word, she had a convincing win in the 200m backstroke, with 2:01.66, well ahead of Emily Seebohm who again took silver in 2:05.04, with Hosszu taking bronze in 2:05.42.

The Netherland's sprint queen Ranomi Kromowidjojo announced her return to competition after a month's break after the World Championships in Barcelona in August, where she won gold in the 50m free, with a win in the same event in 24.02. She defeated fastest qualifier Dorothea Brandt of Germany who finished in 24.34, with Jeanette Ottesen Gray in third in 24.47.

Kromowidjojo was happy with the win, saying: "It's not too bad after the time off, I haven't been back training for long so this is good."



Women's 50m freestyle, Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) - *credit: Giorgio Scala/Deepbluemia*

(Based on a Press Release by Sarah Marks)

The best three performers of this first day in Dubai were:

Men

LE CLOS Chad (RSA): 1:49.07 - 1001 points - 200m fly
TO Kenneth (AUS): 51.64 - 946 points - 100m IM
MOROZOV Vladimir (RUS): 45.84 - 942 points - 100m free

Women

ATKINSON Alia (JAM): 1:02.91 - 990 points - 100m back
ZEVINA Daryna (UKR): 2:01.66 - 960 points - 200m back
HOSSZU Katinka (HUN): 2:06.58 - 953 points - 200m IM
