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SWC 2013, Singapore Day 1: Three world records kick off Singapore leg in style

Russell McKinnon, FINA Media Committee Member

Three key elements came together to enthuse the Singapore crowd on day one of the third and final cluster of the FINA Swimming World Cup at the Singapore Sports School on Tuesday, November 5. The much-hyped Chad Le Clos from South Africa and Hungary's Katinka Hosszu were the main drawcards, and they did not disappoint with two golds each, on what was a world-record-breaking day where the 4x50m Australian mixed medley relay twice went under France's mark.

As the thunder and lightning split the skies and heavy rain poured, Le Clos broke the 200m butterfly world record, eclipsing his August 7 record set in Eindhoven. Le Clos was 0.2 under world-record pace at the 50m, 0.49 at the halfway mark and 0.5 at the 150m. His time of 1:48.56 was 0.48 under that Eindhoven time.

He won from lane two with Poland's Pawel Korzeniowski second in 1:53.59 and Japan's Yuki Kobori was third from lane one, obviously dragged through by Le Clos, but two seconds further down.

He also touched out countryman Roland Schoeman in the 50m butterfly to be the only double gold medallist for men.

"It's a great day for me not just because of the world record, but the 50m fly as well. It's good for me coming off of a lay-off since the World Championships so I'm really excited. Tonight's crowd has been fantastic, and I'm looking forward to tomorrow, especially for the freestyle events, because I know it's going to be very tough," Le Clos said.

Le Clos is no stranger to Singapore, probably gaining his international spurs here when collecting five medals — one gold, three silver and one bronze — at the 2010 Youth Olympic Games.

Earlier in the day, Australia won both heats of the 4x50m mixed medley relay in the morning session with the No 1 team stunning departing spectators with a world record in the second heat.

Robert Hurley opened with the backstroke, world 100m breaststroke champion Christian Sprenger and five-times Barcelona silver medallist Alicia Coutts (butterfly) handed over to world 100m freestyle champion Cate Campbell to bring home the record.

The time of 1:39.08 bettered France's record of 1:39.54 set in the Doha leg on October 20.

This was followed up in the evening with a second world record by the same quartet, finishing in 1:38.02. The splits under the world mark were 0.34, 0.44, and 0.66 to finish in 1:38.02.



Mixed 4x50m medley relay podium - credit: Wong Yoon Wah

Hosszu out-touched Australia Alicia Coutts, who led until the final centimetres, in the 100m butterfly in a sedate 56.58 ahead of Coutts' 56.67 and a gap to Moscow winner Sarah Sjoestroem (SWE) — 57.52.

World champion Hosszu picked up her second gold of the evening in the 200m IM, two seconds off her Eindhoven world record with Australians Emily Seebohm second and Alicia Coutts third.

"I'm actually not too pleased with my performance and am really tired now, but I give my best for all my events. It is paying off for me. So although it tires me, the results give me confidence to go further," Hosszu said.

Emma McKeon rained on Hosszu's parade in her first swim of the night with an all-the-way win in the 200m freestyle, touching in 1:52.40 to Hosszu's 1:52.63.

It was six from six for unbeatable South African veteran Roland Schoeman in the 50m breaststroke, stretching the field from the opening dive and easily holding out Australia's 100m Barcelona world champion Christian Sprenger. Schoeman's time of 25.68 was 0.43 outside countryman Cameron van den Burgh's world record set in 2009.

Ukraine's Daryna Zevina was another to score her sixth successive victory in an event this year — the 200m backstroke, finishing in 2:02.32.

Russia's Vladimir Morozov made it five golds from the six races so far this series in the 100m freestyle, blasting off the block and finishing in a smart 45.67, just 0.21 off the World Cup mark set in 2009. The United States' Anthony Ervin was second in 46.48 and fastest qualifier Tommaso D'Orsogna (AUS) was third in 47.06.

Morozov was equally as swift in the 100m IM, coming home in 51.36, just 0.65 off Ryan Lochte's 2012 record set in Istanbul.

Jamaican Alia Atkinson notched her fourth win of the series in the 100m breaststroke and had a body length after 50m,

cruising to the wall in 1:03.48, more than a second outside Ruta Meilutyte's record set in Moscow last month.

Women's 50m freestyle winner Cate Campbell (AUS) said: "I'm very happy. I came here to do some fast racing and I'm very glad that I'm doing that. I'm very happy with tonight's swim."

After setting a new Australian record in the heats, Cate Campbell took her foot off the pedal slightly in tonight's final, but still managed to pick up the gold ahead of younger sister Bronte. Cate's qualifying time of 23.73 was a new record by just 0.01 of a second, before she backed up to finish in 23.85 tonight.

There are a record 281 entrants for Singapore with 162 males and 119 female swimmers, an increase of 25 percent on last year.

It is the seventh time that Singapore has hosted the World Cup and comes a day after the signing of a new four-year deal for the State city and the last time it will be held at the Sports School, moving next year to the new \$1.3 billion-dollar sports facility closer to the city centre.

The event has attracted huge media interest among television and newspapers today with Le Clos and Hosszu figuring on the entire back page of the broadsheet Strait Times; and huge coverage in the tabloids The New Paper and Today. The Chinese-language Lianhe Zaobao broadsheet led its sports page on Le Clos.

BEST PERFORMERS AFTER DAY 1

Men

1. LE CLOS Chad (RSA): 1:48.56 - 1015 pts - 200m fly
2. MOROZOV Vladimir (RUS): 51.36 - 962 pts - 100m IM
3. GYURTA Daniel (HUN): 2:02.62 - 953 pts - 200m breast

Women

1. HOSSZU Katinka (HUN): 2:05.33 - 982 pts - 200m IM
 2. MCKEON Emma (AUS): 1:52.40 - 967 pts - 200m free
 3. ATKINSON Alia (JAM): 1:03.48 - 963 pts - 100m breast
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