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

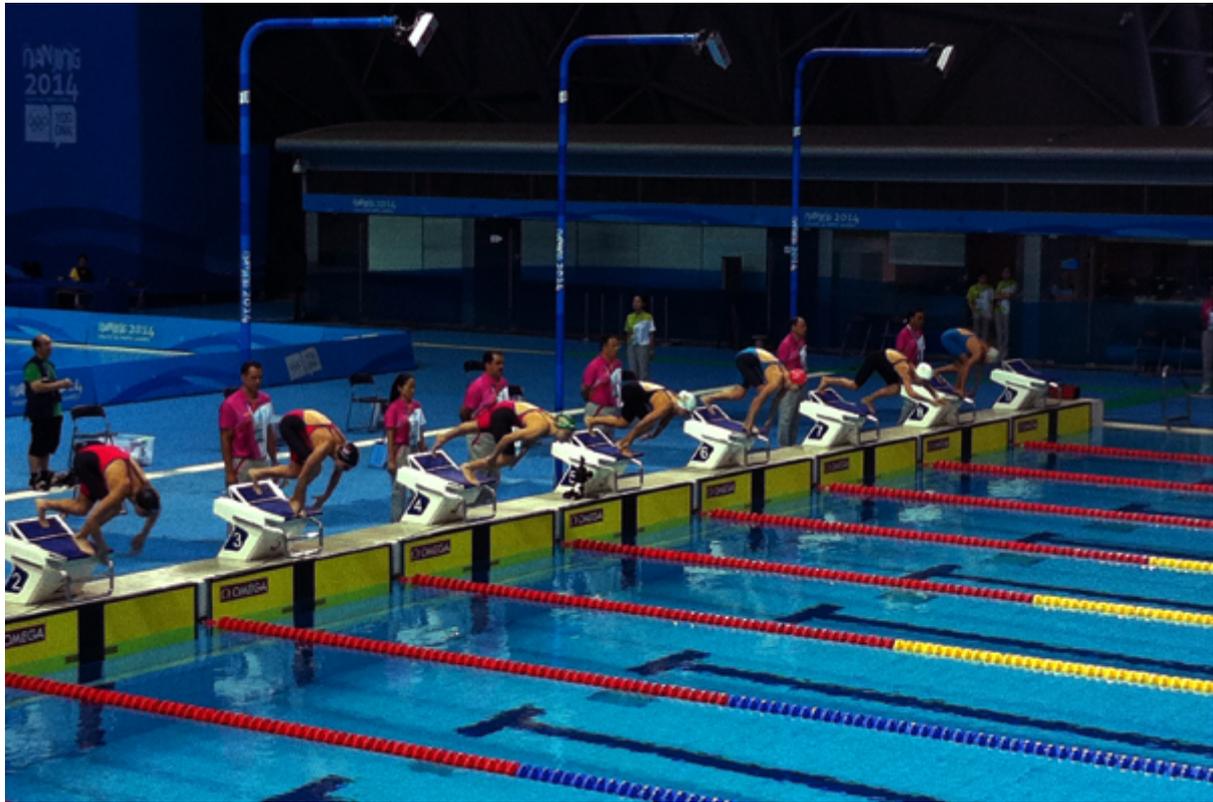
YOG Nanjing 2014, Ruta Meilutyte: "I'm here to inspire young athletes"

Sarah Chiarello, FINA Communications Department

As the world's rising talents showed their best and experienced the taste of victory for the first time at this level on Day 3 of the Youth Olympic Games swimming competition, one remarkable athlete went almost unnoticed at Nanjing's natatorium. Ruta Meilutyte of Lithuania, the youngest Olympic champion ever in the 100m breaststroke at 15 in London two years ago, finds more than one reason to be here: "I've never been to a Youth Olympics before. It's great to be able to inspire young athletes and I'm here to enjoy the experience."

"The YOG is great for young athletes to prepare themselves, be ready for the real thing. They'll know what to expect for future international competitions and will be able to build confidence," Meilutyte said.

"I'm only here for a couple of days. I'll leave to the European championships [in Berlin] after tomorrow [August 20, she'll compete in the 100m breaststroke]."



Ruta Meilutyte (LTU), lane 4, had the best reaction time in her women's 100m breast heat this morning - *credit: FINA*

Meilutyte clocked 1:07.83 to finish first of her 100m breaststroke semi-final. Half an hour later, the Lithuanian swimming star came sixth in the women's 100m freestyle final, which was won by China's Shen Duo in a new world junior record of 53.84.

"I'm quite happy with my swims tonight. I wanted a PB but it's quite good for now," added Meilutyte, who bagged the gold in the women's 50m breaststroke the day before.

Italian girls race to gold

It was a fruitful evening for Italy: Simona Quadarella touched first in the women's 800m freestyle, clocking 8:35.39 ahead of Spain's Jimena Perez Blanco (8:36.95) and Joanna Evans of the Bahamas (8:39.75).

In an exciting finish, Ambra Esposito tied American Hannah Moore in the women's 200m backstroke with matching performances of 2:10.42. Spanish Africa Zamorano Sanz got into the top-three with a 2:11.94.

Napoli-native Esposito said: "I didn't expect to come first, I'm so happy, it's still hard to believe! The YOG is a wonderful experience, it's great to be here."

Moore said on the close finish: "I could feel my legs getting tired in the last 50 metres but I really wanted to defend the gold for USA in this event."

"It's the best feeling ever to stand on the podium and win a medal," Moore concluded with a smile.



The famous #YOGselfie revisited by the women's 200m back Gold Medallists - *credit: Nanjing 2014*

China sets two world junior records

Yu Hexin and Shen Duo delighted the home crowd with two new world junior records in the men's 50m freestyle semi-final and women's 100m freestyle final, respectively. Yu powered his way in the sprint dash to a 22.01 to down the world junior record of Australia's Luke Percy by 10 hundredths of a second.

Chasing her own world junior mark (54.47) in the women's 100m freestyle, Hong Kong's Siobhan Haughey finished second (54.61) behind Shen Duo, who won the event in 53.84. Local hope Qiu Yuhan claimed the bronze in 54.66.



Shen Duo (CHN), very humble after her 100m free victory ceremony - *credit: Delphine Schmutz/FINA*

The men's 100m butterfly gold also ended in Chinese hands with Li Zhuhao touching home in 52.94. Russia's Aleksandr Sadovnikov was runner-up in 52.97 while Australian Nicholas Brown settled for the bronze in 53.18.

Post-race, Brown said: "I did a massive personal best so I'm over the moon right now. I did my own race as best as I could."

"The atmosphere here is insane! It's the biggest crowd I've ever seen, people are incredible and so welcoming," Brown added.

In relay action, Europe occupied all podiums with the British quartet of Scott Duncan, Martyn Walton, Luke Greenbank and Miles Munro taking out the men's 4x100m freestyle in 3:21.19. Italy (Alessandro Bori, Nicolangelo di Fabio, Giacomo Carini and Simone Sabbioni) was second in 3:22.29 while Germany (Marek Ulrich, Damian Wierling, Alexander Kunert and Maximilian Pilger) clocked 3:22.93 for the bronze.
