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YOG Nanjing 2014: Egypt's Akram cruises to victory in 800m free

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The evening's nicest discovery came in the men's 800m freestyle, new on the Youth Olympics swimming programme. Cairo-native Ahmed Akram topped the event in 7:54.29, claiming Egypt's first medal in the competition, moreover gold. "This race was awesome, the second half was absolutely amazing! My strategy was to stay behind [leader Polish Jacek Wojdak] for the whole race and catch up in the last 200m."

Akram, whose parents and friends were watching him racing to gold from the stands and proudly raised the national flag when his time appeared on the scoreboard, is training full-time in South Carolina thanks to a scholarship.

After taking bronze in the men's 400m freestyle on Day 1, Henrik Christiansen of Norway proceeded to win silver in 7:57.07 while the winner of this race, Ukrainian Mykhailo Romanchuk, grabbed third in 7:56.34.



Akram Ahmed from Egypt right after his first ever YOG Gold Medal in the 800m free - *credit: Xinhua/Fei Maohua*

Marcelo Acosta from El Salvador, silver medallist in the 400m freestyle, did not make the cut for the final in the 800m freestyle. This morning after the heats, he said: "Swimming is the best thing I can do and I love it."

Acosta took up swimming at 5, following in his two older brothers' footsteps, both national swimming champions. In the lead up to the Youth Olympics, he spent three months training hard in Florida with his team-mates and coaches.

"My goal for the future is to be in an Olympic final one day and if I can, get a medal!"

"My idol in swimming are my two older brothers, first of all, and Pamela Benitez. She's the best swimmer in El Salvador."

Yu bags 10th individual medal for China

Home favourite Yu Hexin added the 50m butterfly title to yesterday's win in the 50m freestyle, outscoring Dylan Carter of Trinidad and Tobago in the last metres to clock 23.69 against Carter's 23.81. This is the second medal for Carter after yesterday's bronze in the freestyle dash.

Post-race, Carter said: "Yesterday's medal was OK but this one, I have to say, I'm a little disappointed. I was ahead the whole way and it came down to a lock at the end, I was telling myself 'this is bad, this is bad.'"

Mathys Goosen from the Netherlands clinched third in the finale with 24.13.

Another Dutch showed talent in the women's 50m backstroke, Maaïke de Waard, taking out the race in 28.36. British Jessica Fullalove repeated her silver-medal finish from the 100m backstroke on Day 2, clocking 28.66. New Zealand's Gabrielle Fa'amausili secured the bronze in 28.69.

"It was a really good race. I'm happy for now but ready to come back harder and stronger next time," said the Auckland-

based swimmer.

Fa'amausili confessed she looks up to compatriot Lauren Boyle, a three-time medallist - and only second New Zealander to achieve this feat - at the last FINA World Championships in Barcelona.



50m back bronze medallists Gabrielle Fa'amausili from NZL, already looking forward

to getting back in the pool - *credit: Delphine Schmutz/FINA*

Clara Smiddy, who headlines the six-strong U.S. team in Nanjing, finished a disappointing eighth. The Miami-based swimmer won a gold medal in the women's 100m backstroke on the opening night and claimed three bronze medals at the FINA World Junior Championships in Dubai last year.

This morning after the heats, Smiddy said: "My times are not so great, I was definitely hoping to swim faster."

Asked about her overall impression, she added: "Everyone is so nice, excited and young. But there's tough competition taking place, especially with the Chinese, both the girls and guys."

In the women's 4x100m freestyle relay, China's quartet anchored by an ever-impressive Shen Duo clinched a third title, all in world junior record time. The Chinese girls upset the Russian team of Rozaliya Nasretdinova, Daria Ustinova, Irina Prikhodko and Daria Mullakaeva which started strongly but lost their lead lap after lap. China clocked 3:41.19 against Russia's 3:42.39.

Australia's Ami Matsuo, Brianna Throssell, Ella Bond and Amy Forrester bagged a fourth relay bronze in Nanjing, touching home in 3:44.44.



Local star Shen Duo (CHN) took on Russians favourites in the 4x100m free relay, imposing her team

with a superb last lap - *credit: Xinhua/Ju Huanzong*
