

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

---

## Rapsys (LTU): “You always want to race against the strongest”

Pedro Adrega, FINA Communications Department

1-1. After the two days of the first leg of the 2020 FINA Champions Swim Series, held in Shenzhen (CHN) on January 14-15, Danas Rapsys managed a balanced result with his “main rival”, Chinese Sun Yang. On Day 1, the Lithuanian star earned gold in the 200m free, while he had to content for silver in the 400m free. What will be the outcome in Beijing, the second leg of the Series? And, perhaps more importantly, what will the result of the duel in Tokyo, during next summer’s Olympic Games?

At 24, the Lithuanian champion did a perfect season at the 2019 FINA Swimming World Cup, where he won all the 200m and 400m races of the circuit, which had seven legs. Some months earlier, at the FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR), he narrowly missed a medal in the longer distance (he was fourth) and got disqualified in the 200m for a false start. In short course action, he is the reigning champion in the 400m free and runner-up in the shorter event, after a very successful participation at the 2018 edition of the Worlds in Hangzhou (CHN).



Photo by gettyimages

“Everything went according to the plan here in Shenzhen. The times were not bad for this period of the year. I only trained nine days before coming here, so I’m pretty satisfied”, confessed Rapsys, before travelling to the Chinese capital. Asked about his feelings concerning the competition, the Lithuanian great is clear: “It’s the second time I take part in the Series and I really like the format and the way it is organised. You always want to race against the strongest and the four-swimmer final always gives you this opportunity. It is also a special atmosphere in China. The people are pushing for their swimmers, and in my case, a very special one, Sun Yang! The only thing is that we need to travel a lot to come in China and I feel obviously tired. I am not sleeping so much these days, so I have perhaps a disadvantage compared with the local swimmers. In Beijing, with less jet-lag, I still hope to do better”.

Also a backstroker, Rapsys was an Olympian in Rio 2016, precisely in the 100m (24<sup>th</sup>) and 200m back (21<sup>st</sup>). His debut (Barcelona 2013 and Kazan 2015) at the FINA World Championships were also in this stroke, but in Budapest 2017, he tried also the 200m free (10<sup>th</sup>). “It was very hard to swim both strokes for so many years. Two/three years ago, I definitively switch to freestyle and I believe this option brought good results. I now feel better, because I was never really doing so good results in backstroke. It was a smoothly transition”.

With a personal best of 1:44.38 in the 200m and 3:43.36 in the 400m, Rapsys has no problems in recognising his favourite status for the two races at the Tokyo Olympics. “I obviously recognise that status. It’s going to be very hard, as the 400m are on the first day, and the 200m in the second. The schedule is quite complicated. If Sun Yang is swimming both events, I’ll try to beat him. Maybe I have more chances in the 200m...”, explains the Lithuanian, who has also qualified for the 200m IM.



Photo by gettyimages

Living and training in his country, Rapsys is fully determined to arrive in Japan in the best possible shape. “After Beijing, I will rest for one week, and then fully prepare for the Olympic Games. There is a lot of training to do, but also many competitions, so the schedule is really busy”. But the Lithuanian, whose first medal in a FINA competition came in the 2013 Junior Worlds in Dubai (silver in 100m back), takes things with philosophy: “But I am not different that the others. Everyone is the same: wake-up, training, sleep, eat, training, and sleep again. I believe the recovery aspect is the most important thing to achieve success”.

---