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PR 7 -MSWS: Olivier (FRA) and Beck (GER) excel in Doha (QAT)

FINA Communications Department

Marc-Antoine Olivier (FRA) and Leonie Beck (GER) started the 2020 season in the best possible way by winning the first leg of the FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series, organised today in Doha (QAT). The French star needed 1h49m46s6 to complete the men's 10km, while the German ace touched in 1h56m41s1 in the women's field.

Behind Olivier, more than 12 seconds later, Rob Muffels and Florian Wellbrock, both from Germany, had a thrilling fight for the silver medal, with Muffels finally prevailing in 1h49m59s2, 0.1 faster than his teammate. The women's race was even more exciting, with Ana Marcela Cunha (BRA) and Sharon Van Rouwendaal (NED) touching with the same time of 1h56m41s3, a mere 0.2 slower than the winner. In the photo finish, the Brazilian champion was declared second.

Marc-Antoine Olivier was the runner-up of the 10km event at the 2019 FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR) and had won the Seychelles' race of the Series also last year. In 2017, he had been one of the athletes to beat at the 2017 Worlds, with the gold in the 5km and mixed 5km, plus a bronze in the Olympic distance.

Concerning the German duet, Muffels was third in the 10km at the Korean rendezvous in July 2019, having won with his team the mixed 5km competition. In Doha, he had been sixth last year. Wellbrock had also very solid credentials, after his triumph in Gwangju in both the 10km and 1500m free in the pool, and the gold in Qatar last season.

Still in the men's competition, 2016 Olympic champion Ferry Weertman (NED) concluded in the eighth position, while 2019 winner of the Series and "Best Male Open Water Swimmer of the Year" Kristof Rasovszky (HUN) concluded in a very distant 64th place.

In the women's action, this was the first triumph for Beck in the Series, after a second place also in Doha in 2018. At the 2019 FINA World Championships, she had been third in the 5km.

For Cunha, one of the best female open water swimmers in history, podium presences are routine. Winner of the 5km and 25km race at the Gwangju Worlds, the Brazilian ace was the runner-up of the overall series last year (having triumphed in Doha), thus getting the "2019 Best Female Open Water Swimmer of the Year" award. Van Rouwendaal also doesn't need special presentation, with the 2016 Olympic title being her most notable achievement so far.

Outside of the medal area, Haley Anderson (USA), second in the distance in the 2019 Worlds, was fifth in Doha, slightly better than Rachele Bruni (ITA), winner of the 2019 overall series, sixth in the Qatari capital.

82 male and 53 female swimmers started the respective races in Doha.

Medallists in Doha (QAT):

Men

1. Marc-Antoine Olivier (FRA), 1h49m46s6; 2. Rob Muffels (GER), 1h49m59s2; 3. Florian Wellbrock (GER), 1h49m59s3

Women

1. Leonie Beck (GER), 1h56m41s1; 2. Ana Marcela Cunha (BRA), 1h56m41s3; 3. Sharon Van Rouwendaal (NED), 1h56m41s3

2020 FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series:

1. *February 15 – Doha (QAT)*
 2. May 3 – Victoria (SEY)
 3. June 6 – Budapest (HUN)
 4. June 13 – Setubal (POR)
 5. July 19 – Lac St-Jean (CAN)
 6. August 1 – Lac Megantic (CAN)
 7. August 30 – Ohrid (MKD)
 8. September 19 – Nantou (TPE)
 9. October 15 – Chun'An (CHN)
 10. October 24 – Hong Kong, China (HKG)
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