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Another golden day for China in Setúbal

Pedro Adrega, Head of FINA Communications Department

After Xin Xin in the women's event, Day 2 of the FINA Marathon Swimming Olympic Games Qualification Tournament consecrated another Chinese swimmer, Lijun Zu, gold medallist among men in a time of 1h52m18s2. He was followed by Germany's Christian Reichert (silver in 1h52m20s4) and by Ecuador's Ivan Enderica (bronze in 1h52m22s6). It was almost a replica of the women's competition, where Samantha Arevalo also got the bronze for the South American nation.

Zu was already in Setúbal four years ago and had been only 23rd in Portuguese waters, missing the Olympic qualification for London 2012. This time, he managed his effort until the final metres and eventually won the gold. "Today, I felt very good. The conditions were perfect!" About his strategy, he simply added: "To follow the first group, save some energy and then go. I am involved in open water swimming for ten years now, so this is a nice reward". For Rio, the 25-year-old athlete hopes to repeat his performance, knowing that 10 strong athletes have already qualified at the 2015 FINA World Championships in Kazan (RUS).



Christian Reichert (GER) - Photo by Jose Lervao

Christian Reichert, from Germany, is a well-known and experienced open water swimmer, with two gold medals from the two last FINA World Championships, in both occasions in the team event. He is also regularly shining in

the FINA 10km Marathon Swimming World Cup circuit. “The goal was of course the Olympic qualification, so the second place was a kind of bonus. I tried to stay in the pack in the first half of the race, and then I managed my effort until the end”. Highlighting the “perfect conditions in Setúbal, both in terms of the water temperature and safety procedures”, Reichert believes that he can “reach the top-8 in Rio”.

Ivan Enderica, who will be in his second Olympics after London 2012, was also quite satisfied with his performance in Setúbal. “I can say I did a very intelligent race here. The tactics was to progressively improve my position after each lap [respectively 52, 50, 40, 26 and 12], and then swim very fast in the last split. It’s a double emotion for me, as my brother is my coach, so it’s a kind of team qualification for Rio. There, I would be happy to be in the top-8. I know it’s difficult, but nothing is impossible”.



Ivan Enderica (ECU) - Photo by Jose Lorvao

The list of the athletes selected for Rio includes prestigious names of the discipline, including the reigning Olympic champion Oussama Mellouli (TUN, fifth), experienced Evgenii Drattcev (RUS, fourth), 5km world champion Chad Ho (RSA, 11th), or long distance specialist in the pool Jarrod Poort (AUS, 7th). Two notable absences include very experienced swimmers such as Damian Blaum (ARG, 25th) and Evgenij Pop Acev (MKD, 30th).

The men’s race was contested by 61 swimmers, under perfect conditions in Setúbal, with a water temperature of 21°C and air temperature of 27°C.



The medallists in Setúbal - Photo by Jose Lorvao

The list of the 15 qualified swimmers in Setúbal for Rio 2016 is as follows:

Direct qualification:

Lijun Zu (CHN)
Christian Reichert (GER)
Ivan Enderica (ECU)
Evgenii Drattcev (RUS)
Oussama Mellouli (TUN)
Richard Nagy (SVK)
Jarrod Poort (AUS)
Yasunari Hirai (JPN)
Chad Ho (RSA)
Ventsislav Aydarski (BUL)

Continental qualification:

Mark Papp (HUN, Europe)
Erwin Maldonado (VEN, Americas)
Kane Rae Francis Radford (NZL, Oceania)
Vitaliy Khudyakov (KAZ, Asia)
Marwan Ahmed Aly Morsy Elamrawy (EGY, Africa)
