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Swimming stars conclude busy year in Lausanne (SUI)

Pedro Adrega, Head of FINA Communications Department

Nicolas Balthasar was a happy... and nervous man. After two minutes, he stops talking, and takes some water. “Sorry, must be from the emotion of being here”. The president of the Organising Committee of the first Lausanne Swim Cup, to be held this weekend in the Olympic capital, then confesses: “I never thought we would reach this level of participation for this inaugural edition”. At his side, at the Press Conference to open the event, several sounding names of the discipline: US Michael Andrew and Anthony Ervin, Hungary’s Katinka Hosszu, and France’s Medhy Metella and Clément Mignon.

“It all started with a meeting in the beginning of the year in our club, the Lausanne Natation”, recalls Balthasar. “We came up with the idea of organising an international swim meet in Lausanne. This is the city having the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee and of FINA, and we didn’t have this kind of competition. That was weird... So, we set up a business plan, we found the necessary support and here we are, ready to go!”

The competition will be held on December 17-18 at the Mon Repos swimming pool, in a six-lane 25m-pool. Preliminaries and finals will be contested for a total of 32 races in the programme. The event will provide around US\$ 40,000 in prize money. “The idea behind this project is to create a Swimming show in Lausanne. We want people to know that this sport can be spectacular. Besides the performances of the great athletes present here in Switzerland, we have created an impressive setting of lighting and sound in the pool and I am sure all the fans will enjoy the competition”.

Christophe Debize, the technical director of the Lausanne Swim Cup, was also optimistic on the outcome of this Cup: “This is a starting point for us. We want to grow and we want to demonstrate that Lausanne is perfectly able to host this kind of events. The completion of the new Aquatic complex in Malley (including a 50m-pool), to be ready in 2020, will be for us an opportunity to enhance the value and exposure of this event. Who knows if in the future, this cannot be part of the FINA Swimming World Cup series...” he says.

The Lausanne Swim Cup, also supported by FINA, will be attended from 180 competitors from 10 countries, who have won among them over 250 international medals (including 19 Olympic podium presences).



Katinka Hosszu and Shane Tusup visiting the FINA headquarters in Lausanne

Superstar Katinka Hosszu, the “FINA Best Female Swimmer of the Year 2016”, is one of them. Fresh from her amazing success at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Windsor (CAN) – where she won an unprecedented seven gold and two silver medals – the Magyar star was excited to visit Lausanne for the first time.

“We had a very busy year, with the Olympics, World Cup and now short course Worlds, so this is the best way to conclude 2016. I always like this idea of making a great show from a swimming meet. I’ve been training in the pool, and I can say that we’ll have a good time here”, admitted the 2016 three-time Olympic champion.

Besides the above mentioned names, other stars competing in Lausanne include: Cameron van der Burgh (RSA), Fabien Gilot (FRA), Femke Heemskerk (NED), Marco Koch and Philipp Heintz (GER), Peter Bernek and Zsuzsanna Jakabos (HUN), and Pieter Timmers (BEL).
