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Strong and large USA swimming delegation headed to Hungary

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Qualification for the 17th FINA World Championships [1] was open as long as possible for top American swimmers and the outcome is quite clear. 42 swimmers qualified at the National Championships held from June 27 June to July 1 in Indianapolis, securing a spot in the U.S. team travelling to Budapest.

Almost 3 weeks before the swimming competition in Budapest, the nationals saw an abundance of excellent results and great races.

The first name on this quite long list is Hali Flickinger, who qualified for the World Champs by touching home in 2:07.60 and finishing first in women's 200m butterfly.

Then came top stars including five-time Olympic and three-time World champion Nathan Adrian, who finished first in the men's 100m freestyle in 47.96 beating the young swimmer Caeleb Dressel (47.97). This year these were the third and the fourth best times in this event so they both will race in Budapest.

At the Nationals, it was also decided that Adrian's partners in men's 4x100m freestyle relay will be World Championships newcomers Dressel, Townley Haas and Zachary Apple. T

he battle in 100m was repeated in the shortest and fastest event, however, the result was quite the opposite this time. Dressel (21.53) beat Adrian (21.87) by the third best time of this year, hence they will both enter the World Champs in July.

In fact, this was the third world champion title of Caeleb Dressel in the one-week series after finishing first in 50 and 100m butterfly, and his fourth solo qualification. Will multiple events hinder him?

“If I focus all my attention to a specific event at a time, I am capable of putting all my energy into it. I guess this is

the secret” – said Dressel, who is aiming at improving the last 25m in the time left until the World Championships kicks-off, adding that in the company of such excellent and fast swimmers it is not that hard to boost your performance.

Townley Haas, relay member attending his first World Champs, has demonstrated his skills in a solo event, the 200m freestyle, by sweeping the final in the second best time of this year (1:45.03) and qualified for the World Championships. Haas admitted it was easier to swim knowing that he had already secured his place for summer. Chase Kalisz set new personal best and number one time of this year (1:56.51) in men’s 200m and 400m medley alike. Although Kalisz aimed for qualification only, after the tournament he said he could further improve his result in Budapest. Kevin Cordes swept men’s breaststroke events including 50m, 100m and 200m with great results. In 100m he was second best (58.74), in 200m (2:07.41) and 50m (26.88) he was third best in the international field.

As expected, Olympic champion Ryan Murphy excelled in the 200m backstroke (1:54.30) and was runner-up to Matt Grevers (52.71) in 100m.

“I felt great when I saw number one next to my name, it doesn’t often happen when racing with Ryan Murphy. It boosts my confidence now before the World Championships” –Grevers said.

In the women’s operations, Katie Ledecky was the greatest star of the nationals and she did not disappoint the home crowd. She swept all three events, that is 200m (1:54.84), 400m (3:58.44) and 800m (8:11.50) freestyle with the best times of this year.

In spite of this she told she hadn’t set any specific goals concerning her results, she just wanted to do her best while enjoying what she was doing. In her view, long years of hard work and training brought these achievements.

The world record holder will enter 1500m as well, in Budapest, thanks to her time achieved already this season, therefore in this course she did not race with fellow swimmers, among whom it was Leah Smith who touched home first. Her time of 16:01.02 is the second best this year, it goes without saying that it was Ledecky who could do better than that back in spring (15:35.65).

Leah Smith finished second in the 200m, 400m and 800m, too, behind her great rival, so she qualified for the World Champs. She will enter the 400m medley, as well, she won this event in 4:33.86.

Lilly King swept the women’s breaststroke events with outstanding results. Her time on 50m (29.66) was the best this year and a new American record.

“Setting a new American record is always great, yet I hope I can do a little bit better and reach for breaking the World Record in Budapest. When sprinting, you have no time to think, I swam as fast as I could” – said King, who finished first with the second best time of the world in the 100m and 200m as well. Katie Meili came second in both shorter events and got her ticket to Budapest.
