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## Swimming Day 4 - Double gold for Italy; double deception for Ledecky and Sun

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Katie Ledecky (USA) and Sun Yang (CHN) will long remember Italy and its stars, after the fourth session of finals in the swimming competition at the 17<sup>th</sup> FINA World Championships in Budapest (HUN). After 12 “golden” races since her first participation in 2013, the US star could not make the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive success (number 13 was definitely synonym of bad luck...) and lost her first event in the Worlds, the 200m free. The winner, Italy’s Federica Pellegrini, definitively became a legend in the pool, after getting her seventh consecutive medal in this event, since 2005!

Some minutes later, Sun Yang, the favourite in the 800m free, could not oppose the Italian force, with Gabriele Detti getting the gold and Gregorio Paltrinieri earning bronze. The Chinese superstar was only sixth, after holding the world titles in the last three consecutive editions of the competition.

In the men’s 50m breast, and after two WR before the final, Adam Peaty (GBR) easily won in 25.99, the second-ever performance under 26 seconds, and Chad Le Clos (RSA, gold) provoked another deception, this time among the thousands of Hungarian fans, cheering for their hero Laszlo Cseh (silver) in the men’s 200m fly.

In the end of the session, the US quartet easily got gold in the mixed 4x100m medley relay, also establishing two new World Records in the event – first in the heats with a 3:40.28 effort, and then in the final, with a 3:38.56 performance.

### Women’s 200m free

Number 13 brought bad luck to Katie Ledecky in the first final of the day, the much-anticipated women’s 200m free. Trying to get her 13<sup>th</sup> gold medal at the Worlds, the US great lost her first race in FINA’s showcase event, getting the silver in 1:55.18, together with Australia’s Emma McKeon, with whom she fought for most of the race. And the gold medal? Well, the title went to more experienced Federica Pellegrini (28 years old), from Italy, who collects an unprecedented seventh consecutive medal in this race – three gold (2009, 2011 and 2017), three silver (2005, 2013 and 2015) and one bronze (2007). Ledecky was the reigning Olympic and world champion in the 200m free and has already collected three gold here in Budapest: 400m, 1500m free, and 4x200m free relay. The US star was fifth after the first turn, and then consecutively second, behind McKeon (bronze medallist at the Rio 2016 Olympics). The USA-AUS duel seemed the relevant one for the

victory, but in lane 6, Pellegrini swam very fast in the last 50m and got the gold.

*PELLEGRINI Federica (ITA), gold*

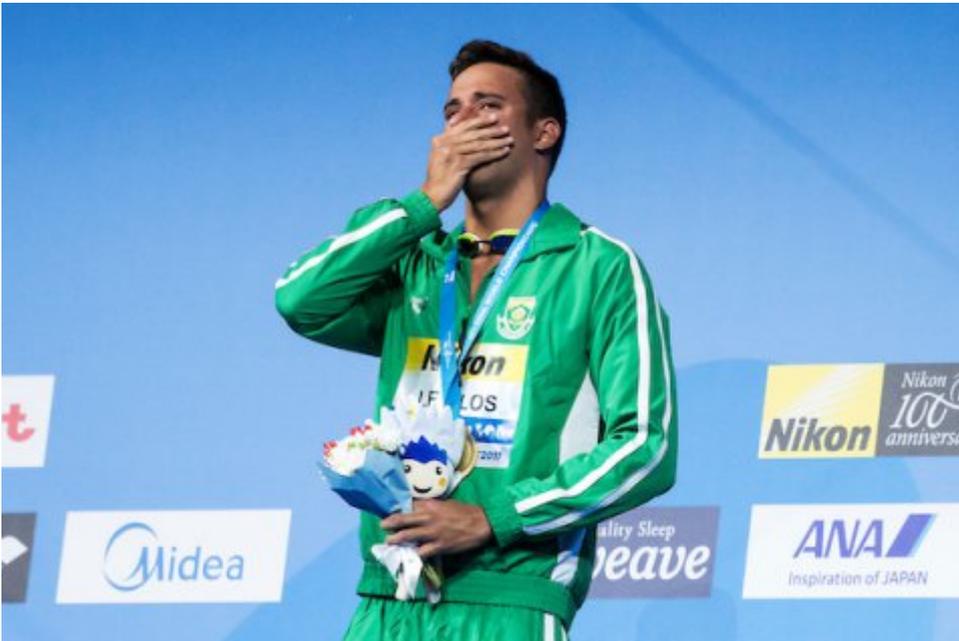
"I was only fourth at the Olympic Games last year, so this is a great success for me. I was thinking of the medal but I never thought it would be gold! What a nice gift for the last 200m freestyle of my life."

*LEDECKY Katie (USA), silver (MCKEON Emma (AUS) also took silver)*

"It was a very tough competition and a very good race. I think I have to watch the video of the race before I can tell more but I am still motivated for all the other races here."

## **Men's 200m fly**

Despite the very strong support from the crowd, Laszlo Cseh (HUN) couldn't upset Chad Le Clos, who took control of the race from the very first metres. The South African earned gold in 1:53.33 and recovered the world crown, after losing for the Hungarian two years ago in Kazan and earning also gold in Barcelona 2013. Cseh, 31, won his first medal at the World Championships in 2003 (also in the Catalonian capital), a silver in the 400m IM. He was seventh at the Rio 2016 Olympics in this race, an event won by Michael Phelps. Le Clos had precisely beaten the US legend in London 2012, but was only fourth last summer in Brazil. In Budapest, the bronze went to Daiya Seto (JPN), who had never medalled in this event – he has two world titles in the 400m IM, in 2013 and 2015. The second local hero, Tamas Kenderesi (third in Rio) could not make the podium, touching in fourth (1:54.73). The most successful athlete at the Worlds in the men's 200m fly was Michael Phelps, with five titles in 2001 and 2003, and again in 2007, 2009 and 2011.



*LE CLOS Chad (RSA), gold*

"It is a great honour to be here in the stadium, probably one of the best I have ever competed in, together with my great friend Laszlo. It was a very emotional event, before, during and after the race for me. I was pretty nervous before the race. The crowd was unreal and I felt like in a football stadium. I am very thankful and lucky that I touched home first."

"It was unbelievable and so emotional, with the hard year I had with my family, both my parents fighting cancer. I fought for my family tonight."

"Me and Laszlo first met in 2010 in South Africa in a training camp and I knew obviously who he was – a great champion outside the pool too. The Hungarian king."

"How can I hate someone who has the same dream than me. It is important to be rival in the pool but not outside and, even if I don't like to lose, I would be happy for him if he won."

*CSEH László (HUN), silver*

“I am so happy to race here at home with people cheering, this fantastic crowd. After the Olympics I took a big break and then started my training again. I had a feeling I wasn’t doing so well but everyone around me said I was doing great so it gave me confidence and I am very happy with this second place tonight. I also lost about 10kg to get back into shape, so it was good. My coach kept supporting me and believing in me.”

“It is a big relief for me to win a medal in Hungary. It takes a big of pressure off my shoulders for my next event. I think I can do something great!”

“With Chad we are rivals in the water but friends in life. We can have fun outside the pool and I think it is important not to hate your rivals in the pool”

“I have had a long career and people have been able to follow me. It means a lot for me that so many people came here to see me racing or when someone stops me in the street to congratulate me.”

### Men’s 50m breast

After setting two World Records – first in the heats (26.10) and then in the semis (25.95) – Adam Peaty (GBR) was virtually unbeatable in the third final of the day. The British star perfectly controlled operations and won gold in 25.99, the second swim in history under 26 seconds. Peaty, 22 years old, has now four gold medals at the Worlds, precisely the 2015 and 2017 titles in both the 50m and 100m breast. The fight for the minor medals was somehow more interesting, with Joao Gomes Junior, from Brazil, beating Cameron van der Burgh for silver – the South American clocked 26.52, while the South African great earned bronze in 26.60. Van Der Burgh is used to shine in this event, after two titles in 2009 and 2011, plus one silver and two bronze before the Budapest rendezvous. With his performance at the Duna Arena he has now six consecutive medals in this race. At 31, Gomes Junior gets his first podium presence at this level. Previous medallists Kevin Cordes (USA, third in 2015) and Fabio Scozzoli (ITA, silver in 2011) weren’t so successful this time.



*GOMES JUNIOR Joao (BRA), silver*

"I didn't feel very well in the beginning, I was worried about the time and the final touch at the wall, but in the end I saw the light. I can say it was a perfect race because I won a medal. I was always thinking about Peaty, focus on him during the 50 meters, however I'm very happy with the result. The competition as a whole is very good, the facilities and transport is amazing, and those things helped me as well to achieve this result."

*VAN DER BURGH Cameron (RSA), bronze*

"This is my six medal in a row in this event since 2007. I must confess that I came for that, and that why I skipped the 100m breaststroke. Regarding the future I have no idea so far, but i will take it as it comes."

### **Men's 800m free**

After three consecutive titles – in 2011, 2013 and 2015 – Sun Yang (CHN) was the man to beat in the 800m free final. The Chinese great was in the leading positions until half of the race, but then became evident that he wasn't in his best shape to get into the podium tonight. Italy's Gregorio Paltrinieri and Gabrielle Detti then took the initiative and were only bothered by Poland's Wojciech Wojdak. In the end, Detti looked fresher and decisively attacked for the gold (the second of the day for Italy), in a time of 7:40.77. Wojdak was second in 7:41.73, while Paltrinieri earned bronze in 7:42.44. Sun Yang was a distant fifth in 7:48.87. Detti owned the best 2017 performance (7:41.64) before the Budapest rendezvous and had been 2016 Olympic bronze medallist in both the 400m and 1500m free, while Paltrinieri was silver medallist in Kazan 2015 and won the 1500m free at last summer's Olympics. At 21, Wojdak earns his first medal at this level, after being sixth in this race two years ago in Russia.



*Gabriele Detti (ITA), gold*

“We train a lot so we are used to this type of competition. But it was great that Italy led this event.”

“I didn’t see Sun Yang, I only saw the Polish competitor. Everyone was fast tonight.”

*Gregorio Paltrinieri (ITA), bronze*

“It was a very hard race and in the middle I really had a hard time keeping the pace.”

“I could see it all happening. I could see the other competitors but I tried to race on my own and not pay attention. IN the end, in the last strokes, I couldn’t gather myself so it wasn’t as good as I had expected.”

### **Mixed 4x100m medley relay**

As with the men's 800m free, this relay will be a new event for the Tokyo 2020 Games and the United States are taking a serious option for an additional Olympic victory. After setting a new World Record in the heats – in a time of 3:40.28 -, the North American quartet was again supersonic in the final, establishing the new global mark in 3:38.56. Swimming with Matt Grevers (backstroke), Lilly King (breaststroke), Caeleb Dressel (butterfly) and Simone Manuel (freestyle), the North Americans improved their 2015 ranking, when they were silver medallists behind the team of Great Britain. In Budapest, the Australians took the relay, finishing second in 3:41.21, while the bronze was shared by Canada and China, in 3:41.25.



*GREVERS Matt (USA), gold*

“It is really cool that we could win both relays. It is a fresh feeling. We fought really hard to get on this team, in this relay spot. It puts a lot of pressure on us, to improve our times and that we make everyone happy.”

“It feels really good to be on the team. I am privileged and that wasn’t expected. It’s not my spot, it’s the backstroke spot but it is really a privilege and I am super thankful.”

“Larkin was on my side so it created a little bit of waves. Clean water is faster for sure, it is just a different feeling. It must be difficult for the women to swim with us because of the change in the water. It is definitely a lot of adaption from their side. It is never good to see someone else’s feet on the side.”

“We all want the Olympic spot. This is a major focus for all of us. And potentially to be on the Olympic relay team is definitely a goal. It is a tough job always for the coaches to form the relay team but we are all in for it.”

“Being able to visualise winning a race has definitely helped my mind-set and helped me throughout my career. But now my strategy is always to do the best I can.”

“I want my daughter to see the footage of all of this. I want to be a role model to her and be on my best behaviour. We don’t know if she will be a swimmer but we will try. I speak everyday with my family. It is a relief for anxiety to speak with them every day.”

In **semi-final action**, five athletes swam under 48 seconds in the men’s 100m free: Mehdy Metella (FRA, 47.65), Caeleb

Dressel (USA, 47.66), Nathan Adrian (USA, 47.85), Cameron McEvoy (AUS, 47.95 – second in Kazan 2015) and Jack Cartwright (AUS, 47.97). In the women’s 50m back, the duel for gold will most probably be contested between Fu Yuanhui (CHN), winner in 2015, and Etiene Medeiros (BRA), runner-up two years ago. In the semis in Budapest, the order was reversed, with the South American qualifying first with 27.18 and the Chinese champion second in 27.19. Franziska Hentke (GER) is the fastest going to the final of the women’s 200m fly, in a time of 2:06.29. Mireia Belmonte (ESP), second in 2013, is third for now, while Katinka Hosszu (HUN, bronze in 2013) is the provisional sixth. Finally, in the men’s 200m IM (and after Phelps and Lochte’s era), Budapest will produce a new winner in the event. The best so far is Chase Kalisz (USA), in 1:55.88, while Kosuke Hagino (JPN), silver medallist in Barcelona 2013, is closely behind in 1:56.04. Wang Shun (CHN), third in 2015, is provisionally the seventh best (1:57.39) going to the finals.

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