

Published on [fina.org](https://www.fina.org) - Official FINA website (<https://www.fina.org>)

Team USA finds success without Phelps or Lochte

By Jolene Latimer

If there was any concern whether Team USA could carry on without Michael Phelps or Ryan Lochte, Thursday night's showing at Duna Arena in the 2017 FINA World Championships should have emphatically quieted the doubters.

The Americans will be just fine. The U.S. men medaled in a total of three races, with Caeleb Dressel and Nathan Adrian going 1-2 in the men's 100-meter freestyle, Dressel winning in a long-anticipated breakthrough 47.17, Adrian just behind in 47.87.

And in the men's 200-meter individual medley, Chase Kalisz made it eight straight world titles for the United States, in 1:55.56; the previous seven came from Phelps or Lochte. Later, the U.S. women, anchored by Katie Lochte, won the 4x200-meter freestyle relay.

The U.S. has now won seven of the last eight world champion relays in the event. With Thursday's races, the Americans now have nine gold medals, one more than the eight the U.S. team won at the 2015 World Championships in Kazan, Russia.



The Americans already have 20 overall; in Kazan, the U.S. won 23. Kalisz's title was not only his first at a world championships. It was also the first time he had competed in the 200 IM on the international stage.

"This has been the best world championships I've been to," said Kalisz, "as far as the team being close and everyone working toward one goal."

For Kalisz, the race also meant redemption. Last year in Rio he narrowly missed gold in the 400 IM. At least year's Rio Games, Kosuke Hagino of Japan touched first, in 4:06.05; Kalisz touched seven-tenths of a second later.

"I'll never forget the last final five meters," Kalisz said.

He ran out of power and knew he wouldn't touch the wall first. "*It haunts me.*"

But on Thursday night he was able to forget the past and fill the shoes of his idols Lochte and Phelps.

This time, Hagino took second, 45-hundredths back. Referring to Phelps, Kalisz said, "*I've been lucky to be around Michael*

my whole life. I've seen how he's handled it. I've tried to do my best job imitating what he's always done."

Kalisz knew the expectations were high.

"*I'm very aware of what those two have done,*" said Kalisz, meaning Phelps and Lochte, before adding, "No one's going to change them or replace those two. But to be able to be on top of the podium in that event, that's cool to me."

Dressel, for his part, became the first American to win World Championships gold in the men's 100 free since Anthony Ervin in 2001. The swim world had been expecting a victory of this sort.

The only question was: when. "He's going to be something special in our sport for years to come," said Kalisz.

Dressel, known for his prowess in short course and, as well, in NCAA-style yards racing, has consistently offered an explosive start and an almost-unmatchable first-half in the long-course 100 free. What Thursday's race proved is that he now has the experience and maturity to swim a fast back half, too. "I'm excited," said Dressel afterward.

"And it felt nice to go 1-2 with Nathan. There's nothing like that, Americans on top."

"*We worked hard for that,*" said Adrian, who has taken on an even-more expanded leadership role in the absence of both

Lochte and Phelps, adding, "*I'm just really proud to be there.*"
