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Masters World Championships: another hit in Budapest

Gergely Csurka, FINA Media Committee Member (HUN)

FINA President Dr. Julio C. Maglione returned to Budapest to watch the ongoing FINA World Masters Championships.

At an official press conference, he praised the hosts' efforts once more, saying the Hungarians put the same effort to stage the Masters event as they had done for the FINA World Championships in July.

FINA Bureau Liaison Dr. Mohamed Diop entered the races himself and also heart positive feedbacks while talking to the other swimmers in the call rooms and on pool deck.

“It’s no coincidence that I’m here again because it’s a pleasure to see how much our beloved sport is appreciated here” said Julio C. Maglione said at the closing press conference of the FINA World Masters Championships. “It’s a great joy to see the Masters athletes to compete in the very same venues as the biggest stars.”

The FINA President recalled the memories from the first week when thousands filled the stands of the water polo arena on the Margaret Island and also in the wonderful synchro venue adjacent to the Vajdahunyad Castle.

“For the FINA Family, both World Championships remain as wonderful experiences in our memory” Dr. Maglione added.

“But for you, for Hungary the legacy is even richer as you have the memories AND a brand new swimming pool and the refurbished ones.”

Maglione finally thanked the efforts for the Hungarian government, Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the city of Budapest and Balatonfüred, and for the organisers and the volunteers and paid special tribute to FINA Executive Member Tamas Gyarfas who was the first in Hungary who started dreaming of hosting a FINA World Championships about ten years ago.



FINA Bureau Liaison of the Masters Committee, dr. Mohamed Diop was also satisfied with the event:

“The greatest achievement is that the FINA World Championships and the FINA World Masters Championships turned out equal: organisers and athletes fight with the same enthusiasm to bring out the very best. There are still two days to go, and I don’t want to say too many things beforehand, but I can already tell you that I have never seen such great FINA World Masters Championships.”

As it later turned out , receiving a question, that he was less satisfied with his own performance as besides his FINA duties, Dr. Diop is a keen Masters swimmer and entered five events here in Budapest as well.

“Though my results were not as good as in Kazan, I was really happy to talk to the swimmers who was really pleased with everything. When we are talking in the call rooms and on the pool deck, I’m just one of them, they don’t know that I’m involved in FINA so this makes these opinions even more valuable.”



FINA Masters Committee Chairman Ed Evelly said that for them the most important is the athletes' feedbacks which were absolutely positive.

“We have to talk about the people in Budapest, in Hungary who waited us with open arms and gave all their hearts.”

He added: “To have these venues for a Masters Championships is simply amazing. I have to say at this stage that there are two days to go at the best ever FINA World Masters Championships.”

FINA Executive Member Tamas Gyarfas gave a rather brief summary:

“Hearing all these assessments, all I can say: it was worth doing it.”

Eva Szanto, CEO of the organising committee shared some stats about the Masters events: **9,283 athletes** arrived to

Budapest, including 321 divers, 521 synchro swimmers (both the largest ever participation in history), 6524 swimmers, 1239 open water entrants (most of them also took part in swimming) and 120 water polo teams. On the busiest day in the Duna Arena 4200 athletes took the starting blocks in the two competition pools, swimming in 1050 relays.
