

Sjostrom, Morozov, big winners of 2018 World Cup

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Two more golds for Sarah Sjostrom (SWE) and one more victory for Vladimir Morozov (RUS) on the last day of the ultimate stop of FINA Swimming World Cup 2018, in Singapore (SGP) on Saturday November 17, which helped them become the big winners of the overall Series.



In her favourite event the 100m butterfly, Sjostrom was under World Record pace in the first 50m 25.47 (25.96), but slowed down in the last 25 and touched home in 55.73, 1.12 seconds away from her own world mark (54.61) set in Doha (QAT) on December 7, 2014.

Sjostrom later turned down the pace-setter Femke Heemskerk of the Netherlands in the 100m freestyle by winning 51.13, 0.16 faster than Heemskerk.

"I was waiting for a perfect 100m butterfly and the local audience helped me a lot though I am very tired. The victory in the 100m freestyle was also boosted by the crazy fans. I couldn't expect any other better ending like this as I won as the overall ranking of the World Cup this year. Now I will start to celebrate my well-deserved holidays," Sjostrom said.

Morozov won the 50m butterfly in 22.17, beating Michael Andrew (USA) 22.32 and local hero Joseph Schooling 22.40.



"It seems like I keep my best shape all the time, but the truth is I was getting in through each race, starting from the first leg, first cluster and now I am closing to my best form. All the races I competed were preparation for the Hangzhou World Championships next month," said Morozov, who also topped the Cluster 3 while Hungarian Iron Lady Katinka Hosszu was the winner of the Cluster but second in the overall ranking, 1 behind Sjostrom in the women's side.



Hosszu proved her reputation as the queen of IM by taking the 200m IM 2:04.79 victory, beating Emily Seebohm (AUS) 2:06.95 and Slobhan O'Connor (GBR) 2:07.95. The Olympic champion also finished third in the 200m backstroke in which Seebohm claimed the title in 2:01.60 with a strong comeback in the last 50m.

"I had great races here and I am happy with all of them. Now I will start to prepare for the next competition. See you in Hangzhou!" said Hosszu who collected 48 medals at the World Cup, including 31 golds, 5 silvers, 12 bronzes.

China's Xu was also ahead of the 100m backstroke World Record line in his first half 23.65 (23.76), but

missed the new record with a time of 48.98, 0.1 shy of his own record established last week in Tokyo.

"My plan was to break the World Record but I was too eager to show in the first 50m but exhausted in the last lap. However, I am the record holder and I am confident that I can rewrite the World Record when I am in good shape," said Xu who swept all three backstroke events in Singapore as well as in Tokyo.

Wang Shun (CHN), 200 IM champion, made his short course debut in the 400m IM and met no strong challenges to win the gold in 3:59.99.

Blake Peroni (USA) clinched gold in 200m freestyle 1:41.15. Anton Chupkov and Kirill Prigoda gave Russia a one-two finish in the 200m breaststroke 2:01.73 and 2:01.85, respectively.

In other women's events, Femke Heemskerk (NED) was crowned in the 800m freestyle in 8:33.00, Jamaica's Alia Atkinson sprinted to take 5th 0m breaststroke gold in 28.93. She was followed by Seebohm (AUS, 30.25) and Yulia Efimova (RUS, 31.11).

Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and China were the top in the mixed 4X50m medley relay.

Nicknamed Indian Michael Phelps, Sajan Prakash (IND) finished 13 in the 50m butterfly heat but he entered the 100m butterfly final for an eighth finish and one step away from the podium in the 200m butterfly.

"I have been training swimming for 20 years and now I train in Phuket, Thailand thanks to my FINA scholarship. I was among the 36 swimmers who received the FINA Scholarship in 2017, as well as another scholarship I got for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. Singapore is the only stop I compete in the World Cup and hopefully I can go to Hangzhou World's. I really enjoy short course races, " Prakash said.



A total of 385 swimmers competed in the seventh and last leg of World Cup 2018.
