

Hangzhou, Day 6: “Grand finale” for team USA

FINA Communications Department

USA clearly dominated the sixth and final day of the 14th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Hangzhou (CHN), winning six gold medals out of the 10 finals at stake. In the three relays in the programme, the North Americans were the best with new Championships records, while in individual races they did the 1-2 in the women’s 200m breast and in the women’s 100m fly, with Caeleb Dressel also imposing his class in the men’s 100m free. Otherwise, Mikhailo Romanchuk (UKR) shone in the men’s 1500m free, Evgeny Rylov (RUS) was the best in the men’s 200m back, Cameron van der Burgh (RSA) won the last race of his career (50m breast), and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED, women’s 50m free) concluded in the best possible way a very successful participation in China.



The FINA President during the Closing Ceremony - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Without surprise, USA was the “Best Team” of the Championships, while individually, Chad Le Clos (RSA) and Katinka Hosszu (HUN) were respectively the “Best Male” and “Best Female” athletes in Hangzhou. The South African star won four medals in the competition - gold in the 100m fly, silver in the 50m and 200m fly, and bronze in the 100m free -, while the Magyar great accumulated four gold (200m fly, 100m, 200m and 400m IM) and one silver (100m back).



Chad Le Clos (RSA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

During the six-day competition in Hangzhou, no less than nine World Records – six in relays (five by the USA and one for Brazil), and three in individual races: Ariarne Titmus (AUS) in the women's 400m free, Kirill Prigoda (RUS) in the men's 200m breast, and Daiya Seto (JPN) in the men's 200m IM.

In the medal chart, USA is the clear leader, with a total of 36 podium presences (17 gold, 15 silver and four bronze), followed by Russia (6/5/3), Hungary (4/1/0), Netherlands (3/6/2) and China (3/5/5).

Starting the last session, the women's 4x50m free relay consecrated the team of USA (Madison Kennedy, Mallory Comerford, Kelsi Dhalia and Erika Brown) winning gold in 1:34.03, a new Championships record. The previous best mark of the Championships had been achieved by the Netherlands in Doha 2014, in a time of 1:34.24. The Dutch quartet (led by very fast Ranomi Kromowidjojo, in 23.60) couldn't do better in Hangzhou, clocking 1:34.55 for the silver, while Australia had to content for the bronze in 1:36.34.



The US team - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Shortly after, in the men's 1500m free, Gregorio Paltrinieri (ITA) fought an epic duel with Mykhailo Romanchuk, from Ukraine. The Italian star is the World Record holder in the event, in a time of 14:08.06 from December 2015, and swam all the race in the lead, but in the end he could not sustain the Ukrainian's strong finish and concluded with a silver (14:09.87). Romanchuk got the gold in 14:09.14, a new Championships record, bettering the previous time of Tae Hwan Park (KOR, 14:15.51), from Windsor 2016. In a distant third place, Henrik Christiansen earned bronze in 14:19.39. It is the fourth consecutive medal for the Italian in this race, after winning in 2014, and getting two silver in 2012 and 2016.



Mykhailo Romanchuk (UKR) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

In one of the most thrilling events of the evening, Caeleb Dressel (USA), Vladimir Morozov (RUS) and Chad Le Clos (RSA) were clear favourites for the medals, and they confirmed everyone's expectations in the 100m free. The North American, swimming in lane 3, touched home in 45.62 for gold, while Morozov concluded in 45.64 for silver and Le Clos was third in 45.89. The Russian had won this race in 2012 and has the Championships' record in this event from Doha 2014 (45.51). Morozov had won the 50m free, while Dressel was silver medallist in the 50m free and 100m fly.



Caeleb Dressel (USA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

The US made the 1-2 in the women's 200m breast, with Annie Lazor getting the gold in 2:18.32 and her teammate Bethany Galat arriving shortly after for the silver in 2:18.62. In third, Fanny Lecluyse gave the first-ever female medal in the history of the Championships for Belgium, clocking 2:18.85. The two Chinese representatives in the final could not make the podium, with Yu Jingyao finishing fourth (2:19.20) and Ye Shiwen concluding in sixth (2:19.52).



Annie Lazor (USA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

After three consecutive wins (2012, 2014 and 2016), Radoslaw Kawecki (POL) was fighting for a fourth crown in Hangzhou, but this time, things were not so easy in the men's 200m back. Evgeny Rylov, the Russian breaststroke star, was clearly the best of the field, touching for gold in 1:47.02, far from the WR from Mitch Larkin (AUS), in 1:45.63. Ryan Murphy (USA) arrived closely behind, but had to content with the silver in 1:47.34. In third (1:48.25), Kawecki and Larkin shared the bronze.

The US delegation confirmed its excellent shape in China, by doing a second 1-2, this time in the women's 100m fly. Kelsi Dahlia, the fastest of the semis, confirmed her credentials and decisively swam for gold in 55.01. Kendyl Stewart managed to earn silver in 56.22, with the bronze going to Daiene Dias (BRA), in 56.31. Ilaria Bianchi, from Italy, winner in 2012, could not reach the podium, and concluded in fourth (56.39).

After announcing his retirement on Day 2, following his victory in the 100m breaststroke, Cameron van der Burgh (RSA) was again the favourite to win the 50m. With the best time of the semis in 25.76, the South African star (WR holder in 25.25) definitively said goodbye to the pool with a new success and a Championships record of 25.41, improving the best mark of the event set by Felipe Franca (BRA) in Doha 2014 (25.63). Accessorily, it was also the second win of Van der Burgh in this event, after the gold in Windsor 2016. In a race plenty of emotion, Ilya Shymanovich (BLR) got the silver in 25.77, while Felipe Lima, from Brazil, finished third (25.80). After his effort, the South African great received a huge applause from the crowd in Hangzhou and touched with the hand, for the last time, his preferred starting block, the one with number 4.



Cameron van der Burgh (RSA) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

In the women's 50m free, Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) added another gold to her rich collection, perfectly controlling operations in the shortest race in the programme. The Dutch star touched home in 23.19, a new Championships record. The former best performance in this competition had been set 10 years ago, in Manchester (GBR), by her compatriot Marleen Veldhuis in 23.25. Kromowidjojo was not far from her World Record of 23.93, established in August 2017 in Berlin (GER). After the US, Netherlands had also a silver medallist in the same event, with Femke Heemskerk getting the silver in 23.67. Etiene Medeiros completed the podium in 23.76. It was the fourth win for Kromowidjojo in this event, after previous triumphs in 2010, 2014 and 2016.

In the last two races of the Championships – the 4x100m medley relays – USA was the best in the men's version, getting another gold in 3:19.98, a new Championships record (improving their own mark of 3:20.99 from Dubai 2010). The North American heroes were Ryan Murphy, Andrew Wilson, Caeleb Dressel and Ryan Held. Russia, winner in 2016, was this time silver medallist in 3:20.61, while Japan replicated the ranking achieved two years ago in Canada – third in 3:21.07.

Among women, the same achievement: gold in a new Championships record, this time in 3:45.58 (the North Americans did better than in Windsor 2016, when they won in a time of 3:47.89). Olivia Smoliga, Katie Meili, Kelsi Dahlia and Mallory Comerford were always in control of operations, despite the crowd's support to home team. In the end, China earned silver in 3:48.80, while Italy (with Federica Pellegrini "closing" the team) got the bronze, after the disqualification of Australia.

QUOTES

Mykhailo Romanchuk (UKR) – Gold, men's 1500m free

"This is a very important medal for me because after the European Championships, I got married and there was quite a significant break. I am especially happy that I won here because it will motivate me even more. I know that my body is capable of much more than this result."

"Of course I especially wanted to beat the world record here because I was swimming with him Paltrinieri in the same race. I wanted to beat his record, but unfortunately I did not. I will continue to train even more, with more effort, in the hopes that at the next races I can show everything I am capable of".

Chad Le Clos (RSA) – Bronze, men’s 100m free

"I was slightly nervous. It was a big field and I was right next to the big guys and obviously I am disappointed not to win, but fair play to the other guys. I almost finished fourth, but it was a fun race and I enjoyed it".



Evgeny Rylov (RUS) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Evgeny Rylov (RUS) – Gold, men’s 200m back

"It was pretty hard in the morning maybe because I got a little bit sick. The third and fourth day of the competition were very emotionally draining, but I think I was able to deliver a good result. Several times I was pressed to the side of the lane. I was going back and forth. I probably could have taken the lead and swam ahead, but I was stuck with everyone because I spent extra energy on going left and right. I was going through these turns, twisting and straightening myself, so I wasted a lot of energy and seconds".

Cameron van der Burgh (RSA) – Gold, men’s 50m breast

"It is better to end my career now. 2018 has been an amazing year, getting married and becoming a Commonwealth champion and now a double world champion. It will be hard to beat this year. I am more than happy with the decision to retire. I have prepared for my next life and I have started that, so I am not sad at all. It is more than a happy ending. It is not every athlete that gets to ride into the sunset as a double world champion".



Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) - Photo by Istvan Derencsenyi

Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) – Gold, women’s 50m free

"It was a really successful week. I was a little tired tonight after a week of racing and it was a little tough, the 50. But it is the last race so you give everything. I wanted to finish first. Everybody is tired and now it is about character".

Kelsi Dahlia (USA) – Gold, women’s 100m fly

"I'm really pleased with the whole meet. This was a great experience. I learned a lot. My body is exhausted, but these relay girls really pushed me to finish well tonight".
