

PR 9 - Swimming stars say “yes” to new Champions Series

FINA Communications Department

With two and a half months to go to the kick-off of the brand new FINA “Champions Swim Series”, many swimming stars have already confirmed their participation in the three-leg competition, taking place on April 27-28 in Guangzhou (CHN), May 11-12 in Budapest (HUN) and May 31-June 1 in Indianapolis (USA).

After the first set of invitations was sent, several Olympic and world medallists expressed their interest in taking part in the Series, distributing almost US\$ 3 million in prize money, plus over US\$ 800,000 in appearance fees and all travel and accommodation expenses covered. All the Series meets will serve as qualifying events for both the FINA World Championships Gwangju 2019 and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Among the men, Anthony Ervin, from the USA, and reigning Olympic champion in the 50m free, will swim his signature event, while Pieter Timmers (BEL), silver medallist in Rio 2016 will be the man to beat in the 100m free.

Gabriele Detti (ITA, 400m free), Russians Kliment Kolesnikov and Vladimir Morozov, American Ryan Murphy and China’s Xu Jiayu will shine in the backstroke races; Brazilians Joao Gomes Junior and Felipe Lima will be strong competitors in the 50m breast; 2016 Olympic champion Dmitry Balandin (KAZ) and 2017 world gold medallist Anton Chupkov (RUS) will have an epic fight in the 200m breast; the best three swimmers at the 2017 Worlds in Budapest: Ben Proud (GBR), Nicholas Santos (BRA) and Andriy Govorov (UKR) – will meet again in the 50m fly, while Chad Le Clos (RSA) will be the protagonist in the 100m fly; Magyar stars Laszlo Cseh and Kristof Milak are serious contenders in the 200m fly; and Chinese ace Wang Shun will highlight the 200m IM.

In the women’s field, Pernille Blume (DEN, Olympic champion), Sarah Sjöström (SWE, world gold medallist) and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) will certainly set the tone in the 50m free, while Penny Oleksiak (CAN, Rio 2016 winner) and Cate Campbell (AUS) will be forces to be reckoned with in the 100m free.

Federica Pellegrini (ITA, 2017 world champion) will be in action in the 200m free and Li Bingjie (CHN) will swim for gold in the 400m free.

In the 50m back, an interesting duel will take place between Etienne Medeiros (BRA, the best at Budapest 2017) and Liu Xiang (CHN); in the 100m and 200m back, Katinka Hosszu (HUN) will be the woman to watch, but in the longer distance she will be closely challenged by Emily Seebohm (AUS) and Kathleen Baker (USA); in the 50m and 100m breast, a trio of US swimmers – Lilly King, Katie Meili and Molly Hannis – is ready to shine; Sjöström, Kromowidjojo (both in 50m and 100m), but also Oleksiak, and Kelsi Dahlia and Dana Vollmer (USA), only in 100m, will bring the show in the butterfly events; in the 200m IM, Siobhan O’Connor (GBR), Kathleen Baker and Seoyeong Kim (KOR) will have the difficult task of swimming faster than the Olympic and world champion Hosszu.

“FINA is very happy with the level of entries so far for this prestigious new Series. It shows that this additional opportunity to compete is deemed important for our Stars. We are preparing a top-class event, where the superb performances in the pool will be accompanied by a great show for spectators on site and

digital users around the world. The 'Champions Swim Series' will definitively allow our Aquatic fans to perceive Swimming in a new way", considered FINA President Dr. Julio C. Maglione.
