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CSS, Indianapolis: 17 Olympic champions off the blocks in Indianapolis

FINA Communications Department

The FINA Champions Swim Series [1] in Indianapolis was officially open today, Thursday May 30, as star athletes Ranomi

Kromowidjojo (NED), Sarah Sjöström (SWE), Lilly King (USA) and Nicholas Santos (BRA) shared their excitement to race at the third and last leg of the first edition of this brand new professional competition.

A total of 50 athletes from 15 National Federations, including 5 World Record holders and 17 Olympic champions will take the plunge on Friday May 31 and Saturday June 1, while 21 North American swimmers will have the opportunity to swim at the iconic Indiana University (IU) Natatorium, a swimming symbol in the United States. Between them, the 50 participating stars have collected 54 Olympic and 146 World Championships' medals.

USA Swimming President & CEO Tim Hinchey III welcomed FINA, the athletes and the coaches as well as the media and the sponsors.

“It is an honour to be here in Indianapolis. We are happy to be the third host of this new Champions Swim Series in this iconic venue. We welcome FINA and the athletes at this tremendous competition. People here and the local authorities have really worked hard to make this happen. We have collaborated and we have an entire community that has rolled its sleeve to make this happen.”



FINA Executive Director Cornel Marculescu continued:

“We are here for the third and final leg of this new competition. A few months ago, nobody believed this event would be so successful in terms of the participation. For this, we have to thank the coaches and the athletes. Without them we can’t do anything. We are here in this special place that has hosted many previous FINA events as we try to showcase swimming in a different way to the world. We mix swimming with entertainment and it was very appreciated in China and in Budapest. For sure we are going to be happy here!”

He added: “Thanks to USA Swimming for everything you have done. NBC is our partner and will broadcast this event to the world.”

Bouncing back on the words from Tim Hinchey, Indiana Sports Corp President Ryan Vaughn said:

“I refer to this venue as the Yankee stadium of the swimmers. It is an iconic venue and we have invested a lot to make the world’s fastest pool even faster in the recent years. Thank you to our partners and FINA for working with us.”

Referring to Olympic champion Lilly King who is from Indiana too, he added:

“Indiana is a great swimming State, the best in the country. People are always happy to see their hero coming back home to compete. It is a meaningful draw.”

QUOTES

Lilly King (USA)

“I live an hour away from here so for me it’s like coming back home. I have been swimming here since I’m 11 years-old so I

“I am now professional since two months. It is great. I am looking forward to being paid for racing. Glad to be moving on

with the pro life.”

“This new competition makes swimming looks like a professional sport and I think this format is really great in terms of

making swimming more exciting and more accessible to viewers and young swimmers.”



Sarah Sjöström (SWE)

“The competition is very different with only four swimmers. I don’t really focus on the outside lanes but it is a cool concept.

The World Championships is my main focus for this year but of course when I get a chance to race my best competitors, it is

a great training opportunity. I think I will be able to clock some fast times here.”

“I hope I will be invited next year of course if this event takes place again but it will depend where the meets are taking place.”

“It is great to be part of this big change. The prize money distributed for this event is very good and I foresee to continue to take part as long as I can. I will have a long career in the sport thanks to this new opportunity.”



Nicholas Santos (BRA)



Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED)

“I hope to compete next year in this competition again but it is an Olympic year so I’ll have to look at it very carefully. I was

in China and I am very much looking forward to competing here. I love big swimming show and it will be a big party with

the other swimmers.”

