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PR 46 – FINA Champions Swim Series 2019 comes to an end in Indy as athletes love new concept

FINA Communications Department

The inaugural edition of the FINA Champions Swim Series [1] came to an end tonight (June 1) in Indianapolis, USA, after a three-leg circuit which stopped in Guangzhou (CHN), Budapest (HUN) and in the American city with a long swimming tradition.

Seventeen Olympic and 20 World champions (for a total of 50 of the world's best swimmers) battled it out at the iconic Indiana University (IU) Natatorium in 28 individual events and two mixed relays.

Among the winners on Friday May 31 and Saturday June 1 were Champions Swim Series most successful swimmer Sarah Sjöström of Sweden and Indiana star Lilly King (USA), both with three victories a piece in Indianapolis. Sjöström won the 100m (52.97) as well as the 50m and 100m fly in 25.48 and 56.42 respectively, while King topped all three breast events: 29.63, 1:05.13 and 2:21.39.

Kylie Masse of Canada was crowned twice this weekend. She won the 100m back in 59.13 and tied for gold in the 50m back with Russia's Anastasiia Fesikova (28.20). USA's Hali Flickinger and Leah Smith, Pernille Blume (DEN), Katinka Hosszu (HUN), Penny Oleksiak (CAN) and Margherita Panziera (ITA) were other winners at this ultimate meet (results below).

In the men's races, Chase Kalisz from the U.S. is the only double winner. He claimed gold in the 200m fly (1:56.91) and 200m IM (1:58.41). Teammates Michael Andrew clinched gold in the 100m fly in 51.87, Cody Miller was the fastest in the 100m breast (59.26), Jacob Pebley crushed the 200m back (1:56.35), Ryan Murphy smashed the 100m back (52.99) and finally Matt Grevers was the best in the 50m back in 24.78.

Brazil did well at the meet too with two golds from Nicholas Santos (22.94) and Joao Gomes Junior (26.60) in the 50m fly and 50m breast respectively.

Russia also settled for two gold medals with Vladimir Morozov smashing the 50m free and Anton Chupkov winning the

200m breast. They touched home in 21.65 and 2:08.98 respectively.

Pieter Timmers (BEL), Danas Rapsys (LTU) and Gabriele Detti (ITA) also collected a Champions Swim Series trophy this weekend (results below).

The innovative relays that are not only mixed but also formed by various nationalities, were a big success in Indianapolis. After a draw on Thursday, Jacob Pebley (USA) and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) were part of the two winning teams for both relays. Michael Andrew and Kelsi Dahlia (USA) were in the winning team on Friday for the 4x100m freestyle, while Jack Conger and Lilly King (USA) completed the team on Saturday for the 4x100m medley.

Athletes' feedback

Matt Grevers (USA)

“This new competition makes swimming look 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.” - Lilly King (USA)

“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.” - Sarah Sjöström (SWE)

“For me, this is the best training opportunity I can get, racing against the world’s best swimmers. It is really good preparation for the World Championships. I love the idea. Two-day event and only four swimmers, what a cool concept! This competition fits really well in the new landscape. Swimming is getting more popular and the image of the sport is slowly improving to attract more fans. Efforts are made to make it look more like a TV show.” - Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED)

“Honestly I am really happy that we have this new FINA Champions Swim Series because it is really the next level right now. It shows a big respect for high level athletes and I experienced really good competition in four lanes. It really is

entertaining for people. I think FINA is listening to the athletes *and we are going to make the Series even better for the next*

season. In Budapest, I saw a really nice new way of presenting the athletes’ entrance. The video background was great and

the show was phenomenal.” - Andrii Govorov (UKR)

“*The new format of the Champions Swim Series is awesome and fun. A lot of the top swimmers of the world are coming*

together to spend time together and we all get to race. If next year’s Champions Swim Series fits in my preparation for the

.” - Chase Kalisz (USA)

“I attended the meeting this morning with FINA and, first of all, this meeting was a big step in the right direction. It shows

some willingness from FINA side to invite all of us athletes and honestly I couldn't be happier. It was a good meeting with

good vibes and everyone agrees that we need to take some steps forward for the sake of swimming. I am happy that I am

here and that I am a part of this.” - Pernille Blume (DEN)

“It is a nice competition. It is more relaxed than the World Championships. Thank you FINA for organising this new event.

The innovation in sport is of utmost importance and the prize money is pretty good as well.” - Nicholas Santos (BRA)

“The new format of the competition makes it a little more exciting and more intense because fewer guys – greater

opportunities to win, right? And I think it is a big step in the right direction for the sport. We are moving into the right

direction so that’s good.” - Cody Miller (USA)

“I love the Champions Swim Series concept! The fact that we can swim next to the best swimmers in the world at the same

time is so fun. We never have a big competition that is so fun with no pressure like this. It is just amazing to get out there

I think it is very important to have competition like this one because we want to have more opportunities to swim. It is nice

to have a competition that shows how hard we work all year around. This is what we deserve and hopefully we can

encourage more people to start watching swimming.” - Farida Osman (EGY)

“This competition is awesome and I agree with what Cody Miller said, it is a step in the right direction. I think the athletes

still don't understand how much value we bring to the table as competitors and entertainers. It is cool to see that FINA is

starting to recognise that and gives us the opportunity to race for real money.” - Michael Andrew (USA)

“The Champions Swim Series is really cool. Getting out of your comfort zone and doing things in a different format is just

numerous of times but I have never seen it look like this. The jumbo lights and everything is definitely exciting.” - Leah Smith (USA)

“This new four-lane style is really good. All swimmers like it. Hopefully next year it will be the same.” - Danas Rapsys (LTU)

“The four-lane format adds pressure and I love it. It means you have to race faster than you would if there were four other people but it means more opportunities.” - Jacob Pebley (USA)

“The shortness of the session might actually be good for spectators and for TV as well. The in-between race show was pretty cool as well, pretty entertaining. There is a pretty good amount of money here which I think is great for a number of reasons

Townley Haas (USA)

"I think it is awesome. It is amazing that there is no prelims, no semis. You get to do it once, you only have to focus for one or two races depending on how many you have entered, it is awesome. The whole concept is super cool and unique. I think it is a great way to grow the sport. The Champions Swim Series is the first opportunity to show that there is more to swimming than just the Olympics. This is really a big deal and it is exciting" - Jack Conger (USA)

Winners in Indianapolis (USA):

50m free: Men – Vladimir Morozov (USA) 21.65; Women – Pernille Blume (DEN) 24.08

100m free: Men – Pieter Timmers (BEL); Women – Sarah Sjöström (SWE) 52.97

200m free: Men – Danas Rapsys (LTU) 1:45.56; Women – Penny Oleksiak (CAN) 1:57.18

400m free: Men – Gabriele Detti (ITA) 3:46.13; Women – Leah Smith (USA) 4:03.86

50m back: Men – Matt Grevers (USA) 24.78; Women – Kylie Masse (CAN) 28.20 Anastasiia Fesikova (RUS) 28.20

100m back: Men – Ryan Murphy (USA) 52.99; Women – Kylie Masse (CAN) 59.13

200m back: Men – Jacob Pebley (USA) 1:56.35; Women – Margherita Panziera (ITA) 2:06.64

50m breast: Men – Joao Gomes Junior (BRA) 26.60; Women – Lilly King (USA) 29.63

100m breast: Men – Cody Miller (USA) 59.26; Women – Lilly King (USA) 1:05.13

200m breast: Men – Anton Chupkov (RUS) 2:08.98; Women – Lilly King (USA) 2:21.39

50m fly: Men – Nicholas Santos (BRA) 22.94; Women – Sarah Sjöström (SWE) 25.48

100m fly: Men – Michael Andrew (USA) 51.87; Women – Sarah Sjöström (SWE) 56.42

200m fly: Men – Chase Kalisz (USA) 1:56.91; Women – Hali Flickinger (USA) 2:06.40

200m IM: Men – Chase Kalisz (USA) 1:58.41; Women – Katinka Hosszu (HUN) 2:08.50

4x100m free mixed: FINA Team 4, 3:28.27 (Jacob Pebley, USA, Michael Andrew, USA, Ranomi Kromowidjojo NED, Kelsi Dahlia USA)

4x50m medley mixed: FINA Team 4, Jacob Pebley (USA), Jack Conger (USA), Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED), Lilly King (USA)

2019 FINA Champions Swim Series calendar:

1. *Guangzhou (CHN) – April 27-28*

2. *Budapest (HUN) – May 11-12*

3. *Indianapolis (USA) – May 31-June 1*

All three meets of the Champions Swim Series were qualifying events for both the FINA World Championships Gwangju 2019 and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.
