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Milak destroys Phelps' 10yr-old WR, double for Italy, two medals for Peaty

Gergely Csurka, FINA Media Committee

Hungary's Kristof Milak just made the unthinkable: he smashed Michael Phelps' 200m fly World Record set in the

shiny suit era, at the 2009 World Championships in Rome. He shove off not only hundredths but almost a full second

(0.78 – 1:50.78), a real stunner from a 19 year-old. Italy had a great day as Gregorio Paltrinieri and Federica

Pellegrini delivered two golds in a span of 10 minutes in the 800m free and 200m free respectively. Adam Peaty

earned another medal in the mixed medley relay, a bronze - here the title went to the Aussies who just edged out the

US quartet by 0.02sec.

When Michael Phelps broke World Record in the the 200m butterfly for the first time in his career in 2001, Kristof Milak was a one-year old baby. Back then the young American swam 1:54.92. In 2009, he was already a legend, fresh from making the impossible, winning 8 golds at the Beijing Olympics. Then the greatest of all-time had the chance to swim in a rubber-suit, aiding speed as no other swimwear before and set a new WR of 1:51.51 minutes. No other man managed to get under 1:52 ever since.



Glory around his head - Kristof Milak, a new star has been born - Credits: Istvan Derencsenyi

What's more, to go sub-1:53 seemed to a mission impossible for many: Chad le Clos had once 1:52.96 when he upset Phelps at the 2012 London final. Laszlo Cseh, who achieved 1:52.71 behind Phelps at the 2008 Games, could go for 1:52.91 at the 2016 Europeans in London. These were the only two occasions between 2009 and 2018 when the clock showed a time beginning with 1:52.

Then surfaced Milak, rocked the Duna Arena as he won a silver in the 100m fly as a 17 year-old in Budapest 2017, then came his first blast in the 200m when he clocked 1:52.71, just 0.01 shy of Cseh's 2008 ER, the second-best effort ever besides Phelps. Since then, he added two more 1:52s, three in two years, while the previous decade saw only two efforts from two greats.

“Kristof will lift butterfly swimming into a new dimension” Le Clos said soon after Milak clocked his third 1:52 while

winning the semis here. The South African perhaps thought that it would happen in the near future, maybe at the Olympics in Tokyo.

But it happened on this Wednesday, here in Gwangju.

What this 19 year-old did was really out of this world. In the final, Chad set the pace as he usually did, was deep under the WR space at 50m and 100m – but until now no one turned with him so close at the halfway mark. Then Milak just geared up and left everyone behind. This is something we saw last year at the Europeans. What we have never seen that he left the red line behind too. The WR-marker wasn't around his hands, or arms or shoulders. It was behind him, somewhere at his lower back. On the tribune thousands roared over the last 30m. As coaches said afterwards, back in the warm-up pool life had stopped, some hundred people watched the screen yelling and screaming and the place was about to blow up.



A dream performance

Then the whole complex blew up when the clock stopped. The time on the board was 1:50.73 – needed to look at it twice before believing it once. Beating Phelps' 10 year-old supersuit WR by 0.78sec is such a feat which words can't really describe.

Around this absolute highlight there were some great swims as well. The session was kicked off with an Italian double: Gregorio Paltrinieri swam on his own and cracked the European Record to win the 800m free, followed by Federica Pellegrini's magnificent triumph in the women's 200m free. The Italian retained her 2017 title as she managed to pass

Ariarne Titmus whom many regarded a favourite after her great win against Katie Ledecky in the 400m. However, the Italian diva came up with something special once more and her space in the homecoming leg was unmatched for the Aussie.



Back to the top: Paltrinieri regained confidence and gold

Only the clock was Adam Peaty's opponent in the 50m breast, in recent years his swims offer only a simple question: whether he would set a new WR or not. In the 100m he did, now he was just 0.11sec shy of his mark from 2017. Still, this 26.06 is his third best-ever blast in the dash. Two Brazilians, Felipe Lima and Joao Gomes Junior claimed the minor spoils behind the British Lion. Peaty doubled down the 50m and 100m breast titles for the third time at the Worlds after 2015 and 2017 – and he managed to add a bronze later in the mixed medley relay.



50-100m double in the third straight edition of the Worlds, first breaststroker with 6 world titles - Adam Peaty is one of the

This session-closing event offered tremendous excitements as the two super-powers, Australia and the United States staged an outstanding duel in this new Olympic event (to be debuted in Tokyo). What made it special that they applied different approaches, the Aussies started with two males, the US opted for a male-female-male-female format. While the Americans turned 5th, the Aussies were second at the halfway mark but Caeleb Dressel pushed them to the first place after the fly leg while the Aussies turned third, trailing by 1.25 behind the Americans. With Simone Manuel swimming the last leg for the US, it was at least dubious whether Cate Campbell could bridge such a gap but she did a miracle, clocked an incredible 51.10 split and out-touched Manuel by 0.02sec at the wall to secure a perfect ending for this brilliant day.



Miracle from Down Under

Earlier in the semis, Dressel sent another strong message on his preparedness and speed by clocking 47.35 in the 100m free but the final with Olympic title-holder Aussie Kyle Chalmers promise a real thriller (Chalmers wasn't in Budapest because of his surgery, so this is going to be there first real showdown between these two rockets).

