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Day of doubles: open water-pool for Wellbrock, 4th straight IM 200-400 for Hosszu, two titles in an hour for Manuel

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The last day of the championships offered some truly heroic efforts as well as historical milestones. Germany's

Florian Wellbrock became the first swimmer winning gold in the open water and the pool at the same edition, while

Katinka Hosszu made the IM-double for the fourth time at the World Championships in a row (and she become the

first female and only the second after Michael Phelps to win five titles in the same event at the Worlds). Simone won

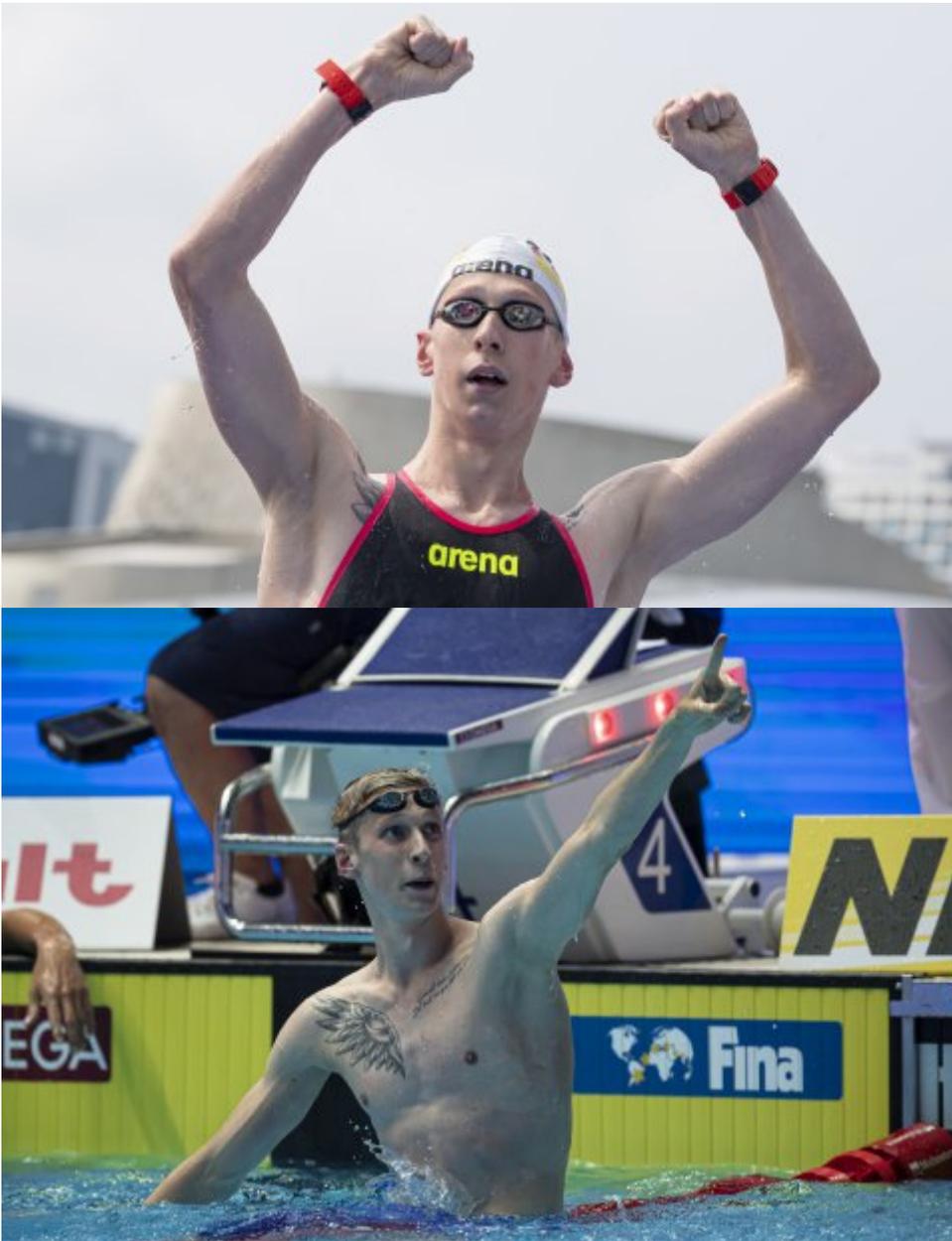
back by Regan Smith). That was Team USA's 14th gold medal, they topped the medal table once more, Australia had

a significant jump from 2017 to the second place while based on gold medals the Hungarians came third, but the

Russians were outstanding too with 16 medals (three of them gold). Just as in 2017, Caeleb Dressel and Sarah

Sjostrom were crowned as the male and female swimmers of the meet respectively.

For four years, Gregorio Paltrinieri seemed to be unbeatable in the 1500m free, he amassed all titles on offer before his reign was rocked for the first time at the short-course Europeans in 2017 when Mykhailo Romanchuk (UKR) finished ahead of him. Romanchuk was ready to repeat that at the long-course Europeans and he was faster than Paltrinieri indeed – only to see Germany's Florian Wellbrock finishing ahead both of them. And the scenario was copied here which set up a historical double: Wellbrock, just 12 days after his brilliant 10km win in Yesou, also clinched a title in the pool, the first swimmer ever to enjoy a golden mix of salty and sweet water in the same edition of the FINA World Championships.



Gold outdoors, gold indoors... - Credits: Istvan Derencsenyi

History was also in the making as Katinka Hosszu changed gear and left her rivals behind over the breaststroke leg of the 400m IM final. The Hungarian won with ease once again and became the first swimmer at the Worlds who could achieve double golds in the same stroke at four Worlds in a row. Besides, that was her 5th title in the same event, a feat only Michael Phelps could achieve at the World Championships before (in the 200m fly). Hosszu won this event for the first time in Rome 2009 as a 20-year old youngster and has been enjoying a quite eventful decade ever since...

The men's event saw Japan's Daya Seto regaining the crown he lost two years ago to Chase Kalisz. The Olympic champion American surprisingly fell in the morning heats and Seto, champion in 2013 and 2015, rushed to a fine win, though Jay Litherland, the other USA challenger had a late surge but the Japanese could save 0.27sec at the end. Stunning many, the bronze went to New Zealand, courtesy of Clareburt Lewis.

The closing session's dash series offered the very best of excitements – the women's 50m breast brought the most straightforward win as Lilly King gained 0.16sec on her rivals, retaining her title and earning some consolation after her

DSQ in the 200m.

Compatriot Simon Manuel completed the 50-100m sprinting double by winning the shorter distance 0.02sec ahead of titleholder Sarah Sjostrom (SWE). Interestingly, the US had to wait 21 years to win this event again after Amy van Dyken's 1998 triumph in Perth.

The men's 50m back wasn't any less thrilling as Zane Wadell from South Africa upset the favourites to touch first, ahead of the Russian top guns Yevgeny Rylov and Kliment Kolesnikov – his winning margin was 0.06sec. While South Africa had some past in this event thanks to 2007 champion Gerhard Zandberg, this was the first time that Russians stood on the podium.

The session-closing medley relays created contrasting stories. The men's event was one of, if not the most thrilling relay final of the meet as the British quartet captured the title for the very first time. The Brits turned 7th after the backstroke leg, but Adam Peaty pushed his side to the first place. Caeleb Dressel hit back with another amazing 49.28 fly leg to take the lead for the US with the Russians sitting in the second place, pushing GB back to third. However, the last leg was one of the most perfect swims ever seen in this event from Duncan Scott: his 0.07 takeover time set the tone then he dropped a 46.14 anchor bomb which blew up the field – he trailed 1.06sec to the Americans but built a winning margin of 0.35sec ahead of the US relay and Russia came third.

The women's final saw something different, the US relay raced only against the clock and beat it not just once but twice! First Regan Smith brought down the 100m back WR in the opening leg (57.57 – she beat the 200m mark two days ago). Gaining such speed it was inevitable that the relay WR should fall at the end – and it happened with a huge margin as Simone Manuel didn't give mercy to the 'red line' and cut 1.15sec from their old mark set in Budapest two years ago.

This was the 14th gold of Team USA which finished atop in the medal chart just as in 2017 though this time their domination was a bit less overwhelming: in Budapest they amassed 18-10-10, 38 medals, here they got 14-8-5, 27. The Aussies produced a significant jump, doubling the total number of medals, from 1-5-4 to 5-10-5 (thanks to 4 relay victories). Based on gold medals, the Hungarians are third with 4 (but had only titles, no minor spoils), in the total count Russia is next which staged its best ever showing with 16 medals (3-7-6). Altogether 21 nations earned medals here, one less than in 2017.

The meet produced 10 new World Records (including one equalled – there were 11 in Budapest). Among all, based on the FINA points, Kristof Milak's 200m fly mark (1:50.73) was the most valuable one (1021), ahead of Caeleb Dressel's 100m fly record (49.50, 1019) and Anton Chupkov's effort in the 200m breast (1013).

There were 17 new Championship Records (2017: 21), 5 new World Junior Records (13), 3 African (8), 12 American (20), 6 Asian (10), 5 European (12) and 7 Oceanian Records (7).

As for the multiple medal winners, Caeleb Dressel tops that list with 8 (6 gold, 2 silver – one more than in Budapest, there he had 7 golds), followed by Simone Manuel (7, 4G, 3S) and Emma McKeon (AUS, 6, 3G, 2S, 1B). In terms of individual medals, Sarah Sjostrom is the best with 5, as she won the 50m fly, came second in the 50m free and 100m fly and third in the 100m and 200m free, an amazing run here – she became or rather remained the female swimmer of the meet just as Dressel who also earned that distinction again after 2017.

Most of the World Championships stars will continue shining: within days, the Far East cluster of the FINA Swimming World Cup kicks off in Tokyo – so stay tuned, plenty more action is to follow!
