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Exciting Changes at Lac Megantic Marathon Swim World Series #6

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(LAC MEGANTIC, Canada) – Once again, change has come to Lac Megantic, the sixth stop (of nine) on the FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series tour.

The annual 10km open water race here on Saturday, August 3, will not only revert to the traditional point-to-point lake crossing (after experimenting with a looped course in 2018), but the 2019 edition will also go from Piopolis municipal beach to a colorful new finish area, in a spacious park about a 10-minute walk down the road from the small beach where fans had gathered in the past.

On the eve of the race, 30 swimmers from 13 countries had already assembled in this small town in southern Quebec, which lies about 450 km southeast of Lac St-Jean, Canada, which hosted the previous tour stop 12 days ago.

Some plot lines to follow:

The 2017 men's race winner, **Kristof Rasovszky** of Hungary, will be seeking his third consecutive victory of the World

Series tour. If successful, the 22-year-old would increase his total career wins to seven and extend his reign as the fourth-winningest man in the history of the World Series circuit, behind the legendary Thomas Lurz of Germany (21) and Italy's Simone Ruffini and Valerio Cleri (tied with 9 apiece).

"I think I'll be trying to be in the back [of the group] in the first half of the race," Rasovszky said, "then I prefer in the last 2 to 3k last to make a longer finish [pack] and try to be in the leading position before the last straight."

Rasovszky said he expected to be challenged by "the two Italians" referring to **Matteo Furlan** and **Dario Verani**. Verani

placed second here in 2018 in Rasovszky's absence. Verani also took bronze at the previous stop in Lac St-Jean and has been training in Montreal for the past two weeks, hoping to find a way to close the 15.79 gap that had separated him and Rasovszky in Lac St-Jean.

Rasovszky also said he will have to watch for **Andreas Waschburger** of Germany, 32, who has been training with French coach Philippe Lucas for the past two years. (Lucas has also coached Marc-Antoine Olivier, Rio 2016 Olympic gold medalist Sharon van Rouwendaal, and freestyle world record setter Laure Manaudou, among others.)

Another favorite on Saturday will be **Marcel Schouten** of the Netherlands, who said he was a bit tired but still enthusiastic after winning the 65th international grand crossing of Lac St-Jean on July 27, a 32km odyssey that took 7 hours, 13 minutes.

Although that race was also point-to-point crossing, Schouten said Lac Megantic will be "totally different because it has buoys so you know how far you are. Also, in 32K you can take your pace, but in this race will be more of a push from the beginning, especially with Kristof here."

In the women's 10km, the top three finishers from the previous FINA 10km race in Lac St-Jean will be competing at Lac Megantic, but a perfect replica of the podium seems unlikely.

If Italy's 28-year-old **Rachele Bruni** can win again, she will score another valuable 800 ranking points in Lac Megantic.

She recently collected a bronze medal at the 2019 world championships in South Korea to add to her 2016 Olympic silver medal from Rio.

But Bruni's younger teammate, **Ariana Bridi** knows these waters well. She won the 2016 race in Lac Megantic and has been the runner-up for the past two years. Bridi should certainly be a factor.

Also returning: the Lac St-Jean runner-up **Anna Olasz** of Hungary and third-place finisher **Caroline Jousse** of France who

has been training with the Italians since April.

On the morning before race day, Bruni said she wasn't sure how the 10km would unfold because she was still waiting for instructions about strategy from her coach. The same was true for Jouisse.

Saturday's weather is expected to be partly cloudy with a high of 26 degrees (78 F) with 56% humidity. The most recent water temperature was 22 degrees, so wet suits will not be permitted.

The men's race will begin at 13:00 local time, followed by the women's start at 13:15.

The top swimmers should reach the finish in approximately two hours.
