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Rasovszky (HUN) and Bridi (ITA) win sprint finishes in Lac Megantic 10km

Aimee Berg, FINA Press Correspondent

(LAC MÉGANTIC, Quebec) – A fierce Canadian wind blew on Saturday during the 10km open water swim at Lac Megantic, but it was not the wind of change.

Kristof Rasovszky of Hungary won his third consecutive FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series event, and **Arianna**

Bridi of Italy took the women's crown.

Each competition came down to a sprint finish.

In the men's race, **Dario Verani** clearly finished second, a body length (1.8 seconds) behind Rasovszky who completed the

course in 2 hours, 6 minutes, 46.3 seconds. Third place, however, came down to a photo finish between **Matteo Furlan** of

Italy and **Hau-Li Fan** of Canada, and the 21-year-old Canadian biology student prevailed.

On the women's side, **Rachele Bruni** finished 2.6 seconds behind her teammate Bridi, and **Anna Olasz** of Hungary placed third.

The course was, once again, the traditional point-to-point lake crossing, the only one of its kind on the World Series circuit. All 30 swimmers were on course simultaneously – along with a flotilla of 36 support boats and 35 additional vessels for safety personnel, officials, and media. The day began in sunshine and finished under clouds. It was the sixth stop (of nine) on the FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series circuit.

After the race, all six medalists discussed what the race meant to them and how it unfolded.



Kristof Rasovszky (HUN) makes a three-peat in Lac Megantic

Men's 10km

Kristof Rasovszky's third victory on this season's tour also marked his seventh career win on the World Series circuit. Afterwards, he explained how he captured first place.

"For the first 2K, I was in the back of the pack to save energy," Rasovszky said, "but it didn't feel good for me. I wanted to know what was happening in the lead. After the 6K feed, I found myself in the lead. I don't know how. In the last K, I had a lot of people around me. I started to push more and really show something to the finish."

Since Rasovszky has now won half of the six races held so far, he leads the overall World Series standings by a large margin (1,980 points over Germany's Andreas Waschburger) – enough to alleviate some pressure from the remaining three races. Additionally, he said, "It's nice because I will miss the Taipei race," referring to the penultimate World Series event on September 7.

Runner-up Verani of Italy said that although he had hoped to beat Rasovszky on Saturday, "I'm happy with this result because it's the same as last year and in the first part of the race, I wanted to be next to Kristof because I knew he's the best right now in this competition."

Furlan had just begun recounting his Lac Megantic debut to FINA.org by saying "at the end, I was in the middle [of the sprint] and when you are in the middle it's not good," when he was briefly misinformed that he placed third instead of fourth.

"Really? Third? Really?" Furlan said, incredulously. If Furlan had finished on the podium, it would have been especially satisfying for the 30-year-old because it had been six years since his last World Series medal, a third place in 2013 in Santos, Brazil. He had won medals at European and world championships since then, but none in the World Series.

Fan, who had led the race through the first several kilometers, trains in a pool in Vancouver, usually by himself, and is entering his fifth year of studies at the University of British Columbia. He was making his Lac Megantic debut and said the day before the race that "a top-5 would good."



Arianna Bridi wins Lac Megantic 10km

Women's 10km

Ariana Bridi won the 2019 edition, just as she had in 2016.

“I tried to increase the speed three or five times,” Bridi said, “increase and slow down, then make a move 1500 meters before the finish and the waves were with us.”

The strategy worked, and Bridi's victory was even more redemptive than it might have seemed.

“I had a terrible world championship,” Bridi said, referring to the 10km last month in Gwangju, South Korea, in which she placed 13th. “I didn't qualify for the Olympics, so now I want to improve my experience so I have to do a lot of races, change my tactics, and learn to fight.”

In doing so on Saturday, Bridi beat Bruni, the newly minted bronze medalist in the world championship 10km. In Lac Mégantic, Bruni had been trying to claim back-to-back wins after her victory in the Lac St-Jean 10km, the previous tour stop, 13 days ago. Instead, she took second.

Despite the loss to her teammate on Saturday, Bruni said, “It was a very beautiful race, more difficult because there were no buoys. For me, to have a perfect swim, I need the buoys. The buoys are very good for me.”

Anna Olasz of Hungary said after placing third, “The race was a little more aggressive than I expected, more fighting, but I knew it was going to come down to a sprint between the two Italians and me. I was expecting it to be choppy, but the waves were bigger than I expected. In the last 1500, I felt good and tried to pass Rachele [Bruni] but I didn't really have the speed in the end. I still gave them a run for their money.”

The three remaining races on the 2019 World Series tour include stops in Ohrid, Macedonia on August 28, Chinese Taipei on September 7, and the finale at Chun' An, China, on September 29.

FINA/CNSG 10km Marathon Swim World Series, Lac Mégantic (CAN)

Men

1. Kristof Rasovszky (HUN) 2:06:46.3
2. Dario Verani (ITA) 2:06:48.1
3. Hau-Li Fan (CAN) 2:06:52.7
4. Matteo Furlan (ITA) 2:06:52.8
5. Guillem Pujol Belmonte (ESP) 2:06:53.0

1. Arianna Bridi (ITA) 2:24:30.0
 2. Rachele Bruni (ITA) 2:24:32.6
 3. Anna Olasz (HUN) 2:24:34.5
 4. Caroline Jouisse (FRA) 2:25:10.1
 5. Stephanie Horner (CAN) 2:25:40.9
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