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Morozov on fire on Day 2 of Singapore SWC

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SINGAPORE – Although Day 2 of the Singapore Swimming World Cup was supposed to mark Joseph Schooling’s homecoming, it was Vladimir Morozov who stole the show.

The 27-year-old Russian lowered two of his own World Cup records (in the 50m backstroke and 100m freestyle) to remain undefeated in those events on the 2019 circuit. He did the same thing on Thursday in the 50m freestyle, which means he will leave Singapore with three World Cup records and a total of nine victories in nine races on tour.

Friday was also a big night for Katinka Hosszu of Hungary who picked up her third win in the women’s 400m medley and Mitch Larkin who snared his third consecutive victory in the 200m medley. To cap off the night, Larkin helped Australia win its third straight gold in the mixed 4 x 100m freestyle relay.

As for Schooling – the host nation’s only Olympic gold medalist – he finished fourth in the 200m medley, his only event in Singapore, behind Larkin, Danas Rapsys, and Thomas Fraser-Holmes. The 24-year-old had only recently relocated to Singapore after spending 10 years in the U.S. He said earlier that he was planning to use Friday’s race to test whether his middle-distance training was paying off as he aimed toward his next major event, the Southeast Asian Games in December in the Philippines.

And it was.

“I wanted to swim high 2:00s or low 2:01,” Schooling said. He finished in 2:00.23.

Below is a chronological look at all 12 events on Day 2 of the Singapore Swimming World Cup:

The evening began with Katinka Hosszu leading the women’s 400m medley from start to finish. The five-time world and reigning Olympic champion clocked 4:39.76 (more than seven seconds slower than her morning heat) to remain undefeated in the event in the 2019 World Cup. Fellow Hungarian Zsuzsanna Jakabos finished second, 5.52 seconds later. Vitalina Simonova of Russia placed third.



Katinka Hosszu (HUN) wins third consecutive 400m medley

In the men's 200m freestyle, 20-year-old Australian Ben Roberts picked up his first win of the 2019 World Cup series. His time of 15:21.58 was 13.08 seconds faster than the runner-up, Henning Bennet Muhlleitner of Germany.

In the men's 50m backstroke Morozov broke his own World Cup record by three hundredths of a second, lowering the mark to 24.40. Michael Andrew placed second in 24.66 and Tristan Jason Hollard of Australia was third, 14 hundredths of a second behind the American. Morozov had been playing with his backstroke start, he said, and had asked Zsuzsanna Jakabos of Hungary for some tips. She recommended that he keep his arms straight, without pulling. "I did it, but it didn't work as planned," he said, despite the victory and the record.

In the very next race, Jakabos won the women's 200m free (1:58.40), ahead of Michelle Coleman (1:58.74) and third place finisher Camille Cheng of Hong Kong who posted her best time in three of four years (2:00.20). En route to the bronze, Cheng said, "I took a fearless approach." She and her teammates also managed to get to Singapore despite the Hong Kong airport shutdown earlier in the week due to political protests. On Tuesday morning, she said, "our flight was cancelled, uncancelled, and cancelled again. When she and her teammates returned to the airport that evening, Cathay Pacific's luggage check was closed, so they had to "carry on only our swimming essentials. Still we made it, a full day ahead, and that's probably why we're having such a good time."

The fifth event was the most anticipated race of the night: the men's 200m medley, featuring Joseph Schooling who, at the 2016 Rio Olympics, rocked the world by defeating Michael Phelps in the 100m butterfly to become Singapore's first (and only) Olympic gold medalist. At the 150m split, Schooling was in third place, but he faded to fourth behind Mitch Larkin who claimed his third straight World Cup win in 1:57.43, runner-up Danas Rapsys of Lithuania who held the lead at 50m (1:59.14) and Australia's Thomas Fraser-Holmes (1:59.98).



Joseph Schooling (SGP) places fourth in 200 IM

In the women's 100m backstroke, Emily Seebohm of Australia edged Hungary's Hosszu by five hundredths of a second to pick up her second win in this event and create a back-and-forth rivalry with Hungary's "Iron Lady." "Katinka won in Jinan; I won in Tokyo," Seebohm said, and on Friday "I could see her next to me so I upped my stroke so I wouldn't have a gliding finish." They were the only two to break one minute, in 59.43 and 59.48.

In the men's 50m breaststroke, junior world record holder Nicolo Martinenghi, 20, of Italy scored a big win, edging 32-year-old Felipe Franca Silva of Brazil and Michael Andrew, 20, of the U.S., who has yet to win a World Cup race this season. "I thought I had it," Andrew said, "I've been a little off since Worlds. We'll hit it hard when we go home."

In the women's 50m butterfly, the question was: which Australian would pick up her second win of the season in this race? Ultimately, Holly Barratt, the 31-year-old who trains in Western Australia, prevailed over her countrywoman and previous World Cup race winner, Cate Campbell, 27, who trains in Sydney, on the opposite side of the country. The key to Friday's win, Barratt said, was only taking one breath in the whole race and "getting the finish right [meaning] I glided in."

In the men's 100m freestyle, Morozov was going for his second World Cup threepeat of the night – to go along with his triple victories in the 50m backstroke. Not only did he succeed, but he set his third World Cup record of the meet (47.88), bettering his 100m free time set in Jinan, China a week ago by 11 hundredths of a second. "It was last year the same thing," Morozov said, "I kept going and I kept improving. I look at things I can do better." Nonetheless, he said, "I didn't expect [to win] in the 100 freestyle."

In the women's 100m breaststroke, Jamaica's Alia Atkinson took the early lead, but American Breeja Larson came on strong in the final few meters. Atkinson prevailed in 1:07.35, edging Larson by two-tenths of a second to claim her second World Cup race in a row. Atkinson said Larson's push didn't affect her. "I was really only thinking of going 1:06," she said, but "In the last six strokes, everything shut down."



Alia Atkinson of Jamaica (green cap) wins her second consecutive 100m breaststroke

In the men's 200m butterfly, Grant Irvine of Australia won decisively in 1:56.77, ahead of countryman Nic Brown, who finished .43 seconds later. They were the only men to swim under two minutes, and even though Irvine's time was good enough to earn his second consecutive World Cup win in the distance, it wasn't easy. "That hurt!" Irvine said, "My legs are gone! The 100 fly is much nicer," referring to his previous victory in Singapore one night earlier.

Singapore was in the medal chase in the last event of the night, the mixed 4 x 100m freestyle relay. But Australia beat the host nation by 5:08 seconds and third-place China by 6.19 seconds to go 3-for-3 in this event on the 2019 World Cup tour.

Competition will continue on Saturday, August 17 with the final 12 events marking the conclusion of the Asian cluster of the Swimming World Cup.
