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Rapsys' record lifts Day 3 of Singapore SWC

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SINGAPORE – Two World Cup records fell on the third and final day of the Singapore Swimming World Cup.

First, in the morning preliminaries, Katinka Hosszu of Hungary broke her own World Cup record in the 200m medley, lowering the mark to 2:08.15 (which was 46 hundredths of a second faster than her previous record set in 2015). The points she claimed for the effort, she said, were crucial to earning the \$50,000 (US) awarded at the end of the night to the female winner of “Cluster 1” of the World Cup circuit.

But the real drama came in the night’s penultimate individual final, the men’s 200m freestyle, when Danas Rapsys lowered his World Cup record for the third time in three weeks. The 24-year-old Lithuanian knocked 69 hundredths of a second off his seven-day old record to re-set the mark at 1:44.38.

“Ohmygod, it’s so amazing!” Rapsys said afterwards. Asked how he was able to find three extra gears in three successive weeks, he said, “I don’t know. We just need to believe.”

Adding to Rapsys’ happiness: his coach, Ina Paipelene, was finally out of the Singaporean hospital to witness his emphatic and ecstatic performance at poolside. Earlier, she had been suffering from chest pains. She is the only coach he has ever had, since he was 6 years old.

“This one is for her!” Rapsys said.

Vladimir Morozov of Russia wasn’t racing on Saturday, but after setting three World Cup records of his own on Day 1 and 2 in Singapore, he earned \$50,000 (USD) as the men’s “Cluster 1” winner.

The circuit will now leave Asia, take a month off, and re-start on October 4-6, when Budapest, Hungary, hosts the fourth stop of the seven-city tour.

For details on the final 12 races in Singapore, read on.



Cluster 1 winners Katinka Hosszu and Vladimir Morozov. Photo by Simone Castrovillari

In the men's 400m medley, Thomas Fraser-Holmes of Australia won his second World Cup race in a row at this distance in what basically turned into a one-man race. The runner-up, Wang Yizhe of China, finished 8.18 seconds back. Nonetheless, Fraser-Holmes said, "In every race, you've got to find a way to push and motivate yourself."

Next, in the 800m freestyle, Erica Sullivan of the US won the longest women's race on the circuit, just as she had at the previous stop in Jinan, China. Her time of 8:26.60 was a full 5.38 seconds ahead of the runner-up, Maddy Gough of Australia, who was trying to win the second gold medal of World Cup career after her Day 1 victory in the 400m free. But Sullivan was too strong. After admitting that she still needs to hold back some speed in the first half of the race, Sullivan said she would finally get to celebrate her 20th birthday at home in Las Vegas. On the actual date, August 9, she explained, "I was inside focused on racing in Jinan."

In the women's 100m butterfly, Zhang Yufei of China clocked 57.94 for the win. "I was not as fast as I was in China," she said through a Mandarin interpreter, referring to her victory at the previous stop on tour. "But I'm still happy with my performance." The six-year member of the national team was not sure whether she would enter more World Cup races this season. "We're still discussing it," she said. Zsuzsanna Jakabos of Hungary placed second in 58.43, edging Jeanette Ottesen of Denmark by .06 seconds.

The men's 50m butterfly was the closest race of the night. Michael Andrew of the US edged out Szebasztian Szabo of Hungary by seven hundredths of a second to win his first gold of the 2019 World Cup series in 23.07. Yauhen Tsurkin of Belarus placed third. "I'm glad I finally got one," Andrew said of accomplishing his mission to claim at least one gold in Singapore.

After winning the women's 200m backstroke in Tokyo and Jinan, Emily Seebohm of Australia won again by taking an early lead and clocking 2:10.50 on Saturday to go 3-for-3. "I was definitely trying to save myself a little bit she said," Seebohm admitted, because she had three more finals to race that night. Wong Toto Kwan To of Hong Kong placed second (2:15.79), and Erica Sullivan of the US placed third on less than a half hour's recovery after winning the 800 free.

After Seebohm's threepart, her compatriot Mitch Larkin did the exact same thing the men's 100m backstroke, winning in 53.43. The gold actually marked Larkin's third threepart this season. He also went 3-for-3 in the 200m backstroke on Day 1 and the 200m medley on Day 2, which means that Larkin remains undefeated in individual events on the 2019 World Cup. Afterwards, he explained, "I had a good training block before Worlds, an all-time best, just missed the taper a bit for Australian trials [for the World team] but it's nice to come and get consistent racing on the World Cup. We've been filming here, and another advantage of consistent racing is you can see if you have any bad habits, or if it's a one-off."

In the women's 50m breaststroke Alia Atkinson won in 30.31, a time that was just five hundredths of a second off her World Cup record set in 2015. "I was trying to get some points so I'm happy for that," she said, "but technique-wise, I'm not. The last five meters I didn't stay as elongated as I wanted to be and I was short coming into the wall." Still, she defeated runner-up Breeja Larson of the US (30.98) and Suo Ran of China who finished third (31.13).

In the men's 200m breaststroke, Andrew Wilson of the US prevailed in 2:09.11 for his second gold of the meet. (He had also won the 100m breaststroke on Day 1). The victory also meant he swept all three World Cup races at the distance. Not bad for his first year on the World Cup. Nonetheless, he said, "It was pretty painful." Lithuania's Andrius Sidlauskas placed second, nearly two seconds back, followed by Jonathan Tybur of the US in 2:12.36.

The women's 100m freestyle was missing the winner of the past two World Cup races, Cate Campbell of Australia, who chose to end her season a day early to attend a friend's wedding. Instead, Michelle Coleman of Sweden claimed victory in 53.63 despite having the slowest reaction time in the final. Holly Barratt of Australia placed second (55.16), followed by Camille Cheng of Hong Kong who had also earned a bronze medal in the 200m free on Day 2.

In the men's 200m freestyle, as mentioned, Danas Rapsys remains unbeaten on the World Cup this season, as he re-set the World Cup record for the third time in three weeks (1:44.38). Thomas Fraser-Holmes of Australia was second (1:48.69), and Cao Jiwen placed third, 6.18 seconds behind the winner.



Danas Rapsys (LTU) resets 200m free record - again! Photo by Simone Castrovillari

In the women's 200m medley final, the four-time world champion and 2016 Olympic gold medalist Katinka Hosszu was victorious in a slower time (2:08.63) than her World Cup record-setting prelims. Zsuzsanna Jakabos placed second in 2:13.64, and Vitalina Simonova of Russia placed third, nearly five seconds behind the runner-up. Of Hosszu's three gold medal performances in Singapore, she said, "this was the best race."



Katinka Hosszu (HUN) wins 200m IM - again! Photo by Simone Castrovillari

In the final event, the US team of Michael Andrew, Breeja Larson, Giles Smith, and Erica Sullivan won the mixed 4 x 100m medley relay, 92 hundredths of a second ahead of Australia's Mitch Larkin, Emily Seebohm, Grant Irvine, and Holly Barratt. China placed third to close out Cluster 1.
