The second and last leg of Cluster #2 of the FINA/airweave Swimming World Cup 2017 kicked-off today in Doha, Qatar, as competition leaders so far, South Africa’s Chad Le Clos and Sweden’s Sarah Sjostrom, are targeting further success at the Hamad Aquatic Centre which hosts the two-day event.

Both of them, as well as Kirill Prigoda (RUS, attended the Opening Press Conference of the event yesterday. 

"Happy to be back in Doha! I was here in 2014 for the World Championships, which were very successful for me. It’s my first World Cup here, it’s going to be fun", said Sjostrom. She continued emphasising: “I had a very good season – I am doing the entirety of the World Cup and it’s going pretty well…”.

"Doha is a second home for me, I’m coming here since 2012. I hope to improve my recent performances in Hong Kong", said Le Clos. Looking at Sjostrom, next to him, he smiled: "I am sure that Sarah will establish a couple of World Records here…"

Prigoda said: “Like Sarah, I was also here for the last time for the World Championships, and I was bronze medallist. So I have fond memories of this pool and I expect everyone will swim fast in this very nice venue”.

The Press Conference was also attended by FINA Executive Director Cornel Marculescu, Qatar Swimming Association President and FINA Bureau Member Khaleel Al Jabir, as well as the FINA Technical Delegate Daphne Bird.

"Outside the frame of the FINA World Championships, the World Cup is the best and most privileged opportunity to further promote our Sport. The event in Doha will be spectacular, as this city is actively preparing for the 2023 FINA World Championships, to take place here in Qatar", declared Mr. Marculescu.

"However, nothing is more important in Swimming than our Stars – and some of them are here with us", added the FINA Executive Director, who concluded by thanking the Qatar Swimming Association and Qatar Sports Council for their support to this organisation.
With the new 2017 rules for the World Cup, swimmers are competing twice in each event over the three-leg cluster, but with the reduction to two events in Cluster 2, the full programme of 34 individual events for each leg was reinstated only for Hong Kong and Doha. Moreover, the general rule of a maximum of four individual events per swimmer/per leg was slightly modified for this second cluster, and now comprises six events per competitor.

**Provisional ranking 2017 (after Hong Kong)**

**Women**
1. Sarah Sjostrom (SWE) 353pts  
2. Katinka Hosszu (HUN) 272pts  
3. Ranomi Kromowidjojo (NED) 155pts

**Men**
1. Chad Le Clos (RSA) 234pts  
2. Tom Shields (USA) 147pts  
3. Vladimir Morozov (RUS) 138pts

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**PRIZE MONEY INCREASE FOR OVERALL AND CLUSTER SWC RANKING**

Right before the start of the second Cluster of the FINA/airweave Swimming World Cup, in Hong Kong (HKG) on September 30, the FINA Executive decided to raise the prize money distribution to the best athletes of the competition.

Concerning the Overall prize money, the first three best ranked men and women will receive respectively US$ 150,000, US$ 100,000 and US$ 50,000, for a total of US$ 600,000. This is a significant improvement compared with the rules announced in the start of the series, where only the overall winner was entitled to prize money.

Moreover, related with the Cluster ranking (based on the overall performances in the cluster), the best eight men and eight women will now receive prize money, while only the first six were entitled to this reward in the past. The new prize money distribution per cluster is now as follows (for a total of US$ 942,000 for the three clusters):

1. 1st place – US$ 50,000  
2. 2nd place – US$ 35,000  
3. 3rd place – US$ 30,000  
4. 4th place – US$ 20,000  
5. 5th place – US$ 10,000  
6. 6th place – US$ 5,000  
7. 7th place – US$ 4,000  
8. 8th place – US$ 3,000

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**SPAIN TOPS FINA SYNCHRO WORLD SERIES’ SOLO RANKING, UKRAINE SECURES DUET LEAD**

The first ever FINA Synchronised Swimming World Series, which explored an innovative integrative concept, concluded in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on September 24, after a six-month long circuit that included seven meets: Paris (FRA), Taiyuan (CHN), Tokyo (JPN), Toronto (CAN), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ESP), Long Island (USA) and Tashkent (UZB.

For this inaugural edition, an official ranking for international competitors was established, giving the athletes access to a total prize money of USD 152,000.

The final ranking of the inaugural FINA Synchronised Swimming World Series unfolds as follow:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Country 1</th>
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<td>JAPAN</td>
<td>UZBEKISTAN</td>
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**Prize money distribution***

*To be eligible to the prize money, National Federations had to take part in at least four of the seven meets*

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