



Britta Steffen is the "queen" of sprint Phelps conquers fifth gold in final day

Four new World Records were established on the eighth and final day of the swimming competitions at the 13th FINA World Championships in Rome (ITA). With these performances, a total of 43 global marks were set in the Italian capital, a record in the history of FINA's major event. The closing day of the championships was also highlighted by Phelps' fifth gold and by the overwhelming proof of Britta Steffen's title of "queen" of the sprint – the German also triumphed in the women's 50m free, after winning the 100m on Day 6. Oussama Mellouli (TUN) confirmed his Olympic title in the men's 1500m free, and Hungary's Katinka Hosszu (20 years old) is definitely the revelation of the championships after getting her third medal, this time the gold in the women's 400m individual medley. Finally, Ryan Lochte (USA) was best in the men's medley events after triumphing in the 400m (he had also won the 00m on Day 5). The FINA Championships Trophy for the best male swimmer went to Michael Phelps (USA), while Federica Pellegrini (ITA) was best among women. The award for the best Team went to the USA.

In the first of the seven finals of the last day of competition at the Foro Italico, Liam Tancock (GBR) confirmed the World Record established in the semi-final (24.08) and touched first in an even faster time of 24.04. It was Tancock's first gold at World Championships, after being twice third in 2007 (50m and 100m backstroke) and also bronze medallist in 2005 (50m backstroke) – he was sixth in the 100m at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Junya Koga (JPN), winner of the 100m backstroke, was second in 24.24, while South Africa's Gerhard Zandberg was third in 24.34. With this second success for Koga, Japan assured a podium position in every backstroke race of this competition after Ryoosuke Irie's silver in the 200m.

Another short race was the women's 50m breaststroke. Owner of the championships record (30.24) established in Rome, Yulia Efimova (RUS) also confirmed her status as favourite and concluded first in a new WR of 30.09, faster than the 30.23 established by

Canada's Amanda Reason (pending FINA approval) on July 8, 2009. Efimova had been second in the 100m, while Rebecca Soni (USA), first in the longer distance, was this time the silver medallist in 30.11 in a very tight final with the Russian. Sarah Katsoulis (AUS), the fastest of the semi-finals, was third in 30.16. Before these championships in the Italian capital, Efimova had never medalled in this competition, being also fourth in the 100m and fifth in the 200m at the Olympics in the "Water Cube".

"I'm really really emotional right now," Efimova said of her victory, "and I feel honoured to be beside these other competitors because they are very strong. This is my first international gold medal and for sure, these championships were really an excellent experience for me (practically and motivationally). From now on I will try and be stronger and improve." As a child, she said further, her dream was precisely to win in championships like this one, and for sure I will now focus on the Olympics."

Even without Phelps, the United States seemed to dominate the most demanding event of the programme - the men's 400m individual medley – very well. Ryan Lochte, winner of the 200m in a world record time of 1:54.10 (and third in the 200m backstroke), was again the best in the longer distance, this time touching in 4:07.01, far from the 4:03.84 (WR) his compatriot Michael Phelps clocked when winning the Olympic title in 2008. The second US swimmer of this final, Scott Clary touched in second (4:07.31) and conquered (at 20) his first major medal at this level. Hungary's Laszlo Cseh, the second fastest qualifier for the final (and second in the 200m), was third in 4:07.37.

"There were a lot of tough competitors out there," Lochte said later. "Back in Indy (referring to Indianapolis and the USA World trials) Clary told me that we were going to go head-to-head again here in Rome and it happened and it's great." The USA brought a young team to Rome, he explained, but the meet was nevertheless phenomenal for them. "Everyone stepped it up and did their part; like Tyler did

Medals Table FINAL				
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	TOTAL
USA	11	11	7	29
CHN	11	7	11	29
RUS	8	8	4	20
GER	7	4	1	12
AUS	4	5	10	19
GBR	4	3	2	9
ITA	4	1	5	10
SRB	3	1	0	4
HUN	2	1	3	6
BRA	2	1	1	4
ESP	1	7	3	11
JPN	1	2	1	4
TUN	1	2	0	3
DEN	1	1	0	2
SWE	1	1	0	2
ZIM	1	1	0	2
RSA	1	0	3	4
NED	1	0	1	2
MEX	1	0	0	1
CAN	0	4	5	9
FRA	0	3	3	6
GRE	0	1	0	1
POL	0	1	0	1
AUT	0	0	1	1
CRO	0	0	1	1
CUB	0	0	1	1
LTU	0	0	1	1
MAS	0	0	1	1
NOR	0	0	1	1
ROU	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	65	65	67*	197

*TWO BRONZE MEDALS IN THE MENS 200M BREASTSTROKE & WOMENS 50M FREE

tonight and hopefully we'll keep that streak alive." He was however, not entirely satisfied with his 400m performance. "I feel that if it was the first race instead of the last I could have gone faster. I was kind of going on fumes at the

end. After this morning I was kind of dead... I even told Clary at the end that if there were about 5 more yards I would have probably finished in fourth, but it's a race and that's what happens, and it turned out good."

Like Cesar Cielo (BRA) in the men's field, Britta Steffen (GER) was also seeking to win both the 50m and 100m free here in Rome. After victory in the two-lap event on Day 6 (52.07, WR), the German (also victorious in the fastest two events of the programme at the 2008 Olympic Games), was again first in a new World Record of 23.73 – improving the previous global mark established by Marleen Veldhuis (NED) in April 2009 (23.96). The Dutch swimmer was third in Rome (23.99) sharing the bronze with Australia's Cate Campbell. The silver was conquered by "veteran" Therese Alshammar (SWE, almost 32 years old) in 23.88. It was Alshammar's first award in these championships and the sixth overall since 2001 – her only gold so far was obtained in the 50m butterfly two years ago in Melbourne AUS).

"I'm very satisfied," Steffen said afterwards, "I like to race these girls. This is also my first time under 24 seconds and I'm very proud." When asked about her tactics, she was brief: "I always aimed at being first, and I will continue to aim to be the best." With regard to her training for these championships, she said she made more variations to her gym preparations as well as her work in the water, and that it made a difference. "I have become European Champion, then Olympic Champion and now World Champion so I am extremely happy."

Lisbeth Trickett (AUS), winner in 2005 and 2007 was only sixth this time (24.19), while the "super-veteran" (42 years old) Dara Torres (USA), winner of three silver medals in Beijing (including in this event) was last of the final in 24.48.

In a very tactical race, Oussama Mellouli (TUN) conquered his first gold at these championships, after being second in the 400m and 800m free. Managing his effort very well, the Olympic champion controlled his main challengers (China's Lin Zhang, first in the 800m free, and Canada's Ryan Cochrane, third in the "Water Cube") and left them the first initiatives of the race. Zhang took the lead at the 700m-mark, but the Tunisian was first at 1000m. Then, for about 300m, Cochrane was always very close, but with 200m left to go, Mellouli decisively sprinted for victory, touching first in 14:37.28 – the WR belongs to Grant Hackett (AUS), who clocked 14:34.56 in 2001 in Fukuoka. It was the first world title ever for

Tunisia at the FINA World Championships (Mellouli was first two years ago in the 800m, but this result was then cancelled due to an anti-doping violation some months before the competition in Melbourne). Cochrane was second in 14:41.38, while the second Chinese Yang Sun was third in 14:46.84.

"After my two silvers," Mellouli said, "finally I got my gold and it's a great way to end the week. It's been an emotional rollercoaster for me..." He admitted his success was due to strategy: "It was a very tactical race. Tonight I just wanted to win this race, so I tried to put myself within striking distance all the way to the 1000m-mark, then pick up the pace in the final stage." Mellouli called his 800m result a shock, saying he didn't expect such a performance from the Chinese swimmer Zhang Lin. "This is the first world championship title of my career and first for my country so I'm very happy."

Katinka Hosszu (HUN) will certainly be remembered as one of the positive revelations of these championships. After being third in the women's 200m butterfly and 200m individual medley, Hosszu (20 years old last May) is the new world champion of the 400m individual medley in a new championships record of 4:30.31. The Hungarian (who confirms this country's talent and vocation for the medley events) was always in control of the operations and left behind two "giants" of this distance, Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry (second in Beijing and again silver medallist in Rome with a time of 4:32.12) and Olympic champion Stephanie Rice (AUS), third in 4:32.29. Rice had established the WR in this distance in the "Water Cube" with 4:29.45, while Hosszu had been a discreet 12th in Beijing. It was the second medal in the Italian capital for Coventry, after her triumph in the 200m backstroke. Rice had been second in the 200m IM on Day 2.

Finally, in the last event of the programme, the men's 4x100m medley relay, the USA did not have any special difficulties "recovering" the title they lost in 2007 to Australia – after winning in 2003 and 2005. Racing with Aaron Peirsol (backstroke), Eric Shanteau (breaststroke), Michael Phelps (butterfly) and David Walters (free), the Americans touched first in 3:27.28, a new World Record, the 43rd and final global mark of these championships – in Beijing, at the 2008 Olympics, USA was also first with the (previous) record of 3:29.34. Germany, second in 2001, was also silver medallists in Rome, touching in 3:28.58 (despite a very fast last leg by Paul Biedermann), while Australia got bronze in 3:28.64. It was Phelps' fifth gold medal of the championships – after winning in

the 100m and 200m butterfly, the 4x100m and 4x200m free relay. He was also second in the 200m free, precisely behind Paul Biedermann. Since 2001, Phelps now has an accumulated total of 24 awards at World Championships (including 20 gold and four silver medals) – the best record for any athlete in the history of FINA's major event.

"We wanted to finish on the best note we could," Phelps said afterwards, speaking for the team, "and that was breaking the record. Everyone swam great splits, and we had Eric and Dave doing their first relay, and that was great because there's nothing like being in that first relay." Phelps said that the Rome championships had been "an unbelievable event, with unbelievable fans." He said: "If the stands are packed, and the stands are loud, we're going to swim faster. These rivalries we have; these races we have, that's what makes the sport exciting."

At the beginning of the session, a minute of silence was observed by all athletes, officials and spectators in memory of Hironoshin Furuhashi, the FINA Vice President who passed away in his sleep during the night preceding the last day of these championships in Rome.

WATER POLO

Women's water polo tournament awards

Top scorer: Iefke v Belkum (NED) with 25 goals
official FINA Award

Best goalkeeper: Rachel Riddell (CAN)
official FINA Award

Tournament MVP: Krystina Alogbo
by media representatives

All Star Team *by media representatives*

Rachel Riddell (CAN)
Kameryn Craig (USA)
Heather Petri (USA)
Iefke van Belkum (NED)
Krystina Alogbo (CAN)
Angeliki Gerolimou (GRE)
Blanca Gil (ESP)

Men's water polo tournament awards

Top scorer: Filip Filipovic (SRB) with 20 goals
official FINA Award

Best goalkeeper: Stefano Tempesti (ITA)

official FINA Award

Tournament MVP: Vanja Udovicic (SRB)
by media representatives

All Star Team by media representatives

Stefano Tempesti (ITA)
Jeff Powers (USA)
Vanja Udovicic (SRB)
Filip Filipovic (SRB)
Xavier Garcia (ESP)
Miho Boskovic (CRO)
Nikola Janovic (MNE)

FINA IN MOURNING

Goodbye to Hironoshin Furuhashi, FINA Vice President

Rome (ITA), August 2, 2009 – With great sadness, FINA announces the loss of its Vice President Hironoshin Furuhashi (JPN), who passed away the last night in his sleep here in Rome.

“Furu San”, as he was known within the FINA Family, was a reference for FINA. Born in 1928, he was Japan’s “Flying Fish” in the 1940s and has established several world records in the 1500m free.

After he concluded his brilliant career as an athlete, he actively participated in the organisation of the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo and since then became a key-official in Japan: he was President of the National Olympic Committee and National Swimming Federation of his country.

In 1968, he enters the FINA Bureau and was presently FINA’s Vice President. Recently awarded by the Emperor of Japan, “Furu San” also received FINA’s highest prizes and was considered an example of devotion to Aquatic sports worldwide.

FINA will always remember him as a kind and efficient official.

Thank you “Furu San”!

In this very sad moment, FINA expresses its sincere condolences to Furuhashi’s family and to the entire aquatic community in Japan.

RESULTS

MEN

50M BACKSTROKE

1. TANCOCK Liam GBR 24.04 WR
2. KOGA Junya JPN 24.24
3. ZANDBERG Gerhard RSA 24.34
4. WILDEBOER Aschwin ESP 24.57
5. LACOURT Camille FRA 24.61
6. MEEUW Helge GER 24.63
7. GRIGORIADIS Aristeidis GRE 24.87
8. DI TORA Mirco ITA 25.15

400M INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

1. LOCHTE Ryan USA 4:07.01
2. CLARY Scott Tyler USA 4:07.31
3. CSEH Laszlo HUN 4:07.37
4. PEREIRA Thiago BRA 4:08.86
5. KIS Gergo HUN 4:10.40
6. NEVO Gal ISR 4:12.33
7. MARIN Luca ITA 4:13.63
7. HAFFIELD Thomas GBR 4:13.63

1500M FREESTYLE

1. MELLOULI Oussama TUN 14:37.28
2. COCHRANE Ryan CAN 14:41.38
3. SUN Yang CHN 14:46.84
4. COLBERTALDO Federico ITA 14:48.28
5. ZHANG Lin CHN 14:54.23
6. DAVIES David GBR 14:57.03
7. RIVERA Marco ESP 15:01.92
8. PIZZETTI Samuel ITA 15:19.38

4x100M MEDLEY RELAY

1. USA United States of America 3:27.28 WR
2. GER Germany 3:28.58
3. AUS Australia 3:28.64
4. BRA Brazil 3:29.16
5. FRA France 3:29.73
6. RUS Russia 3:30.60
7. JPN Japan 3:30.91
- GBR Great Britain DSQ

WOMEN

50M BREASTSTROKE

1. EFIMOVA Yuliya RUS 30.09 WR
2. SONI Rebecca USA 30.11
3. KATSOULIS Sarah AUS 30.16
4. NIJHUIS Moniek NED 30.46
5. PIERSE Annamay CAN 30.53
6. CARLSON Kasey USA 30.65
7. REASON Amanda CAN 30.67
8. WHITE Tarnee AUS 30.91

50M FREESTYLE

1. STEFFEN Britta GER 23.73 WR
2. ALSHAMMAR Therese SWE 23.88

3. CAMPBELL Cate AUS 23.99
3. VELDHUIS Magdalena NED 23.99
5. HALSALL Fran GBR 24.11
6. TRICKETT Lisbeth AUS 24.19
7. WEIR Amanda USA 24.23
8. TORRES Dara USA 24.48

400M INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

1. HOSSZU Katinka HUN 4:30.31
2. COVENTRY Kirsty ZIM 4:32.12
3. RICE Stephanie AUS 4:32.29
4. MILEY Hannah GBR 4:32.72
5. BEISEL Elizabeth USA 4:34.90
6. SMIT Julia USA 4:35.33
7. JAKABOS Zsuzsanna HUN 4:37.85
8. HUNKS Tanya CAN 4:38.15

RECORDS (DAY 8)

4 WORLD RECORDS

50Back Men 24.04 Liam Tancock GBR
50 Free Women 23.73 Britta Steffen GER
50m Breast Women 30.09 Yuliya Efimova RUS
4x100 MR Men 3:27.28 United States of America USA

6 CHAMPIONSHIPS RECORDS

50 Back Men 24.04 Liam Tancock GBR
50 Free Women 23.73 Britta Steffen GER
50m Breast Women 30.09 Yuliya Efimova RUS
4x100 MR Men 3:27.28 United States of America USA
4x100 MR Men 3:29.48 h Germany GER
400 IM Women 2:07.46 Katinka Hosszu HUN

