



New heroes, new faces, strong images

IMPRESSIONS

The smiling baby face of Tom Daley, born in Plymouth (GBR) on May 25, 1994, will be long remembered. He won the gold medal, with 539.85 points, in the men's 10m Platform on Day 5. Daley performed his six dives almost to perfection: he was awarded "ten" nine times in three dives: a 10 in the fourth dive; four 10s in the fifth and the sixth. Daley beat both Chinese: Bo Qiu, who got second, and Luxin Zhou, who could not do better than third place.

The Australian Matthew Mitcham took the fourth, 1.05 points far away from the third spot. The gap between the first and the fourth was just ten points: one of the tightest platform competitions ever. What happened later in the press conference room was even more unforgettable. At a certain point a man standing at the bottom end of the room asked for the microphone, saying he wanted to put forward a question. Having realised that this person was not a journalist, the press conference co-ordinator asked him to qualify himself and say the name of the media he represented. The man could not comply as he turned out to be Rob Daley, Tom's father, who had managed to break in the room in spite of the security. Once he grabbed the microphone he said: "I'm his father. Tom, come and give me a cuddle." Tom interrupted his statement, stood up and ran to hug his father while tears were spilling down. While embracing his boy the father put on Tom's shoulder the British flag, the Union Jack. All this happened in front of the television cameras. Funny, moving, and above all, unprecedented.

The youngest world champions in diving remain the Chinese Shuwei Sun who was 14 and 11 months in 1991 when he also won the 10m platform. Among the women it is Mingxia Fu, who claimed the 10m title at same championships before FINA imposed a minimum age restriction of 14 years.

Another major success for Great Britain happened in the Open Water Swimming 10km women's race, when Keri-Anne Payne conquered the first gold medal for her country in this discipline. The silver medallist at the 2008

Olympics in Beijing, Payne belongs to a generation of talented open water swimmers and is surely one of the best ambassadors for Great Britain for the 2012 Games in London.

In synchronised swimming, Eve Lamoureux, representative of the Canadian team and winner of the bronze medal in the Free Combination, broke the hearts of all the young men in attendance at the press conference with her beauty, her glamour, her sympathy and the vivacity of her expressions, using both spoken and body language.

In men's water polo, Croatia inflicted a heavy defeat to Montenegro. The outcome of this game was quite a surprise as Montenegro won the FINA World League (in June), the European title (last summer) and was a semi-finalist at the Beijing Olympics. One explanation is that Croatia's supremacy became more evident when Montenegro's centre-forward Boris Zlokovic (#10) was compelled to leave the game because of an injury – a cut under the left eye, with blood copiously spilling down his face.

Finally, a spectacular fall from the 3m springboard by Pavlo Rozenberg made the news. Replays of that spectacular fall were broadcast by several television stations with many photographs being simultaneously published in many newspapers and on many web sites. After jumping on the board, the German diver lost his balance; then, while attempting not to fall badly on the board itself, he managed to grab it with his hands before letting himself clumsily fall in the pool.

SYNCHRO

Spain gets finally the gold

Spain finally got its first gold medal in synchronised swimming at the FINA World Championships, after winning the Free Combination event - the fourth final of the 2009 edition of the competition in Rome (ITA). After arriving in the Italian capital with 13 medals

Medals Table
After day 5*

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	TOTAL
CHN	4	5	5	14
RUS	4	2	0	6
GBR	2	0	0	2
ESP	1	3	0	4
AUS	1	0	1	2
GER	1	0	0	1
MEX	1	0	0	1
USA	0	2	0	2
CAN	0	1	3	4
GRE	0	1	0	1
ITA	0	0	2	2
BRA	0	0	1	1
MAS	0	0	1	1
RSA	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	14	14	14	42

* Men's Open Water 10km medals not included (pending FINA decision)

since 2003, the Spanish squad had conquered three more silver awards in the first three events of the 13th FINA World Championships and, after a very solid programme, got its first world title with a total of 98.333. Gemma Mengual and her teammates were inspired by the music of Led Zeppelin ("Stairway to Heaven"), leaving behind an elegant routine from China (97.667) and the quite spectacular squad of Canada (96.167).

In a competition marked by the absence of Russia (the explanation given for this non-attendance is that the team was completely renovated after the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and did not have time and enough experience to ensure the victory – the only result acceptable for this nation) the level of routines was extremely high and this was surely the most interesting final so far in Rome. "I still can't stop my heart, which is beating so fast," said a thrilled Raquel Corral to the journalists after the Spanish victory. "My first World Championships was in 1998. Then, 11 years ago, the team of Spain was 12th. Now, we are



the winners," recalled Anna Tarres, the coach behind the Iberian success.

According to Tarres, the achievement of Spain in the last years – which culminated with the first two Olympic medals (silver) in its history in 2008 in Beijing – is mainly due to the continuity of work within this group: "Most of my athletes are working with me for at least eight years. For me this is the key for achieving a result that is solid and constantly improving".

Also very happy was the Chinese delegation after earning the silver medal – the highest classification ever at this level. Following the previous bronze medals in the Duet Technical and Team Technical, China has definitively entered in the group of the best three nations in the world in synchronised swimming. Displaying a superb routine – inspired by "Swan Lake" - in which nine of the athletes were dressed in white, while one of the "swans" was in black, the Asian athletes see this result as a legacy for their country. "This medal will certainly encourage young competitors in China to pursue their goals and dreams," considered Xiaohuan Zhang, one of the members of the team. At home, at the "Water Cube", China had conquered its first Olympic medal (bronze in the team event), and appeared this year in Rome in a very good shape to also obtain their first World Championships awards (they have gotten three so far).

In third, Canada also enchanted judges and spectators, with a routine based on "street dance". "We wanted to create a nice atmosphere in the pool. That is why we chose choreography based on clapping on the body, with original face expressions, and less solo and duet moments," explained Eve Lamoureux, one of the bronze medallists.

A powerhouse in the discipline in the past, Canada was away from the podium in the last editions of the FINA World Championships – in fact, before Rome, their last medals were obtained in 2001. In the Italian capital, this is the North Americans' second bronze medal, after the Solo Technical.

Italy was again fourth, but is showing in Rome that it also has a solid team for the years to come. Japan was fifth and with three events to go (solo, duet and team free), and this Asian team could be remembering the 13th FINA World Championships for a negative reason: it was the first one since 1973 without medals for them. Finally, preparing for the 2012 Olympic Games at home, in London, the team of Great Britain got a brilliant seventh position. USA did

not take part in the Free Combination event.

OPEN WATER

Payne gets first gold for GBR in open water

Keri-Anne Payne - the 10km Olympic silver medallist from the Beijing Games – is now the reigning World Champion over this premiere open water distance. She raced perfectly today at Ostia Beach, winning with a time of 2:01:37. This victory makes Payne just the second female British open water athlete in history to reach the podium at FINA World Championships (after Cassandra Patten, who did not race today, won 10km silvers in 2007 and 2008), and Payne is the first British open water swimmer to win a gold. Ekaterina Seliverstova (RUS) – with a time of 2:01:38 – earned silver after a head-to-head sprint to the end with Martina Grimaldi (ITA), who took bronze in 2:01:38.6, much to the delight of the spectators.

Afterwards, Payne, who will also swim the 200m medley in the pool on Sunday, July 26 - discussed her winning plan: "I just went in wanting to get to the front of the pack; just try to get to the front and stay there because I knew other swimmers would want to beat me and I wasn't going to let that happen." She added that the lead boat had done a fantastic job of keeping the group on track because there some wind and waves that might have caused them to go off-course. In fact, the race was very close for almost the entire 10km. From the start the swimmers made a large group and did not considerably disperse until the final minutes. As such, it was very difficult to predict the outcome.

Seliverstova - 5km silver medallist at the 2007 Melbourne World Championships and 2008 World Open Water World Championships of Seville - was thrilled with her medal, explaining that after yesterday's 5km she decided that merely a top-10 finish in today's 10km would be satisfactory. "Yesterday," she explained, "I was sure my result would be better, but it was a very high-speed race; I never swam it at such a high speed and that's why I couldn't get a better result." She was furthermore afraid that she would not have enough time to recover for the 10km. Some luck, she concludes, also played a role: after the last turn, she found herself just behind Payne and understood that if she could stay with her she would end up on the podium.

The bronze medallist and crowd favourite Grimaldi was exuberant and emotional following

the race. "This competition and this medal," she said, "give me strength for the 25km (scheduled for Saturday, July 25) and of course I have to address my recovery now and prepare for it." Grimaldi has been 10th in Beijing 2008 and 26th in Seville 2008. Curiously, among the first ten at the Olympic Games last, six of them were also in the top-10 in Rome.

Angela Maurer (GER, 34 years old) was fifth, after being fourth in Beijing 2008 and Melbourne 2007 and seventh in Seville 2008. In 2003, in Barcelona (ESP), she had been second in the 10km, and in 2006 in Naples she won the 25km.

In an unfortunate turn of events that likely influenced the outcome of the race, close to half-way across the course Larisa Ilchenko (RUS) - reigning Olympic and World Champion in this event from Melbourne 2007 - withdrew from the race and emerged from the water limping. Evidently, the injury to her upper left leg that had caused her such problems in yesterday's 5km (she had already explained that it inhibited her ability to sprint for the win) had become too much for her to bear on this day.

Race Highlights

Swimmers were tasked with completing four laps of a 2.5km course. When the race began, Payne – a clear favourite – comfortably took the lead position. She was followed, also predictably, by Ilchenko. Most of the swimmers in the first 20 minutes were confined in a close "V-shaped" pack, struggling to break free, move forward and secure a good position. Race conditions were fine, the sea was clam and the athletes stroked smoothly, with few noticeable or intentional obstructions, except for around the pontoons. Excellent tactics were engaged in this 10km.

After 40 minutes, Eva Fabian (USA) had taken 2nd, with Ilchenko in 3rd and Angela Maurer (GER) in 4th. Approaching one hour – almost halfway and two laps gone – Yurema Juarez Requena (ESP) challenged Payne for the lead, as did Aurelie Muller (FRA). Melissa Gorman (AUS) – yesterday's 5km champion - also joined the struggle. All these swimmers however, with the exception of Maurer (5th place at the end) and of course Payne, would finish well out of medal range. Ilchenko exited the race shortly thereafter, about the same time Okimoto started pressuring from the outside.

The lead group stayed the same for about a half hour more, although with interchangeable positions. Then, with about an hour and a half

gone, Seliverstova started making her move. By that time, Payne had taken back the lead, with Maurer in 2nd. Natalie Du Toit (RSA) also made an appearance, temporarily moving into bronze medal contention and looking strong. But still, even at this late stage, none of the leaders had distanced themselves from the pack. It was still very close.

Fifteen minutes later, the race had begun. Payne increased her lead by several metres, still looking consistent and showing her class. Behind her, Maurer, Seliverstova, Okimoto (from the outside), Muller, and Grimaldi (who had reached 4th) fought on. They reached the last buoy and started vying for the win. Payne put about 3m between herself and the rest with about 400m left to go. She held on and won with a small but safe distance while Seliverstova and Grimaldi cruised in behind her to determine the podium.

Lurz makes it a double

Thomas Lurz (GER) has taken his second gold medal in two days at these 13th FINA World Championships by winning the men's 10km at Ostia Beach, proving that he continues to be among the top-three open water swimmers in the world. Incredibly, this is Lurz's twelfth medal from FINA World Championships, six of which have been gold. In the 10km alone, he has medalled five times since 2004, taking gold twice. Finishing in the silver and bronze medal positions were the two American competitors in the event: Andrew Gemmell and Francis Crippen, respectively. These two reached the top-3 after making dramatic surges to the end within the last 500m of the race.

The official results (times) of the competitors are presently pending and have thus been temporarily withheld due to a protest appeal that was filed in response to circumstances related to the conclusion of the race. The following FINA Press Release has been issued in response to the situation:

"Following an appeal from USA Swimming after the men's 10km race of the Open Water Swimming competition at the 13th FINA World Championships in Ostia (ITA) on July 22, 2009, the FINA Jury of Appeal (the FINA Bureau) will meet on Thursday (July 23) after the conclusion of the FINA Technical Swimming Congress.

The decision of the FINA Jury of Appeal will be communicated as soon as possible following the meeting."

Race highlights

Lurz took the lead early and held it for the first half hour of the race, trailed by the two Italian

representatives in the race: Valerio Cleri and Simone Ercoli (ITA). The majority of the race was basically conducted by the pace-setting of Lurz and Cleri, both of whom were medal favourites. Trent Grimsey (AUS) was also a persistent threat, often swimming in third place.

Later, into the second hour, these top four still controlled the front of the pack, with Cleri more often in first. In the final lap, Bertrand Venturi (FRA) took a turn in the lead, as did Brian Ryckeman of Belgium. The swimmers moved rapidly and in a long pack formation. With just 1.5km to go the swimmers took their last supplement, after which Cleri regained the top spot, with Ryckeman, Lurz and Grimsey and Ercoli chasing him down.

From that point forward however, the competition elevated and up to eight swimmers were suddenly in medal contention. A chain reaction took place within the field as the leaders accelerated. The end was in sight and a golden battle took place, but all the while Lurz was undefeatable; never relenting with his powerful stroke. Notably, multiple swimmers broke free from the pack behind and swiftly advanced from the outside, including the two Americans Gemmell and Crippen, who would, in a surprising outcome, steal the minor medals from the four to six swimmers that had led the entire way – including the home favourite Cleri.

WATER POLO

Being world champion means something. Just ask Croatia.

Balkan neighbours Croatia and Montenegro slugged it out in the men's water polo pool in Group B with European champion Montenegro suffering a huge lapse against the Croatians. Montenegrin head coach Petar POROBIC laid the blame at his door, saying "it was the team's mistake as well as mine."

While Montenegro lost concentration, Croatia's mind was well focused as it took a 4-2 lead at quarter time. This became 6-4 at halftime after which Montenegro had to continue without Boris ZLOKOVIC, who injured his elbow.

"We are waiting for any news concerning ZLOKOVIC'S injury. We still don't know if it is just a minor problem or a more serious one," Porobic said.

A four-goal burst in the second four minutes of the third period saw Croatia wrap up the game

at 11-4. Montenegro scored the only goal of the fourth period — little consolation.

But beware the early result, warns Croatian captain Samir BARAC.

"Today's key factor was our team spirit in attack as well as in defence. However, in my opinion, this game was not so fundamental. In the past, after we managed to win our preliminary group, we lost in the final round of a tournament."

China beat Brazil 9-5 in the other Group B match.

Spain was untroubled in beating Australia 13-10 in Group C while Serbia, second in the group, hammered Kazakhstan 20-3.

Group A proved interesting, especially when Germany grabbed a draw with Olympic champion Hungary. The equaliser came 39 seconds from time when Marko STAMM lobbed in a goal from centre forward 39 seconds from time. Canada had little difficulty when downing South Africa 12-1.

Group D witnessed the United States of America in fine form, beating Macedonia 13-6 after a healthy 6-1 start. Italy rounded off the day with a second loss in front of 5000 fans, falling to Romania 6-5. Romania took the lead in the match and Italy always seemed to play catch-up.

Game 25, 09:30, men, BRA 5 CHN 9

Referees: Steven ROTSART (USA), Guy PINKER (RSA)

Quarters: 0-1, 3-2, 0-3, 2-3

Extra man: BRA 1/6; CHN 2/5

China came through with the Group B victory that will lift it to at least third place and advancement in the tournament. WANG Beiming gained his three goals from three attempts with one on extra as China pulled away in the second half thanks to a better conversion rate on extra and shots taken.

Game 26, 10:50, men, MNE 5 CRO 11

Referees: Gaetan TURCOTTE (CAN), Erhan TULGA (TUR).

Quarters: 2-4, 2-2, 0-5, 1-0

Extra man: MNE 3/16; CRO 6/12

Croatia took the Group B lead with a clinical display of water polo over European champion Montenegro. The statistics tell the story with Croatia's conversion rate far too good for the Montenegrins. Couple that with the spectacular performance by Croatian goalkeeper Josip PAVIC (17 saves) and Croatia proved why it is the world champion. Montenegro led at the start

and levelled the game at 4-4 but the third quarter was a disaster for POROBIC'S team.

Game 27, 12:10, men, ESP 13 AUS 10

Referees: Boris MARGETA (SLO), Filip GOMEZ (ITA).

Quarters: 3-2, 3-2, 5-2, 2-4

Extra man: ESP 3/9; AUS 6/12

Spain turned the screw on Australia in the third period, winning it 5-2, which proved to be the final margin. Australia had the early advantage but Spain soon took control and reached 6-3 at one stage in the second quarter and a stunning 11-5 in the final minute of the third before BOYD made it 11-6. Australia scored four of its extra-man goals when it didn't matter in the final quarter. Seven Spaniards made the scorers' list.

Game 28, 13:30, men, KAZ 3 SRB 20

Referees: Ulrich SPEIGEL (GER), Nikolas STAVROPOULOS (GRE).

Quarters: 1-4, 1-7, 1-3, 0-6

Extra man: KAZ 0/8; SRB 4/7

Serbia used its full arsenal to wipe Kazakhstan, claiming the final quarter with a slow demolition. The Serbs were relentless and countered off every Kazak mistake and then finishing with superb cross passes. A telling factor is that Kazakhstan was guarded so tightly that it couldn't take a shot off its eight extra-man chances.

Game 29, 17:00, men, USA 13 MKD 6

Referees: Alan BALFANBAYEV (KAZ), Stephen KNIGHTS (NZL).

Quarters: 3-0, 5-2, 3-2, 2-2

Extra man: USA 4/8; MKD 3/10

The USA gained their second victory with a romp over Macedonia who took nearly half the game to score its first goal. Once the score had reached 6-1, Macedonia became a valued opponent but USA had the luxury of the big margin. AZEVEDO netted four goals but he had a team around him also contributing. For referee Stephen KNIGHTS it was his 50th international match in his sixth appearance at a FINA World Championship. He made history in 1994 at the same venue when he refereed alongside his father, the late Geoff KNIGHTS < the first time a father-son duo had officiated water polo at the same world championship. The record for refereeing at FINA World Championships is held by FINA TWPC Member Eugenio MARTINEZ of Cuba, who refereed every event from the inaugural 1973 event in Belgrade until Rome, 1994 and then his retirement at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta < seven world championships over 21 years.

Game 30, 18:20, men, HUN 7 GER 7

Referees: Nenad PERIS (CRO), Sergio BORRELL (ESP).

Quarters: 2-3, 1-0, 2-1, 2-3

Extra man HUN 2/9; GER 1/9

Germany came up with a vital point from in this thrilling encounter. The Germans led 3-2 and limited Hungary to one in the second quarter. Denes VARGA and captain BIROS brought up a two-goal margin in the third but MACKEBEN on extra narrowed the deficit to 5-4. Gergely KISS missed a penalty attempt and SAVIC gained his second to level the game at 6-6 with four minutes left. HOSNYANSZKY drilled one from the top at 3:36 for Hungary but in the last minute SZIVOS was ejected and STAMM took the easiest of lobs from two metres to gain the draw at 0:39.

A beaming German captain Marc POLITZE said: ³It was great to grab a point for us against Hungary. We haven't beaten them for 20 years but we get the odd draw. The result means nothing because now we must beat Canada. Hungary will win the group, for sure.² He said discipline was the key to the draw.

³We wanted to take our time and run the 30 seconds down each time. The result came in the last quarter when Hungary was nervous (not to lose).² Hungarian super coach KEMENY lamented after the game that: ³You can't score seven goals and hope to win the game.² He said his team did not play well on attack and that the result was 'right at the end of the game'. He said a late start to his team's preparation and the new players made it difficult but that 'tomorrow is another day'.

Game 31, 19:40, men, RSA 1 CAN 12

Referees: Mark KOGANOV (AZE), Gideon REEMNET (NED).

Quarters: 1-2, 0-4, 0-1, 0-5

Extra man: RSA 1/11; CAN 3/8

Canada not only beat South Africa but produced one of the best defensive games of the tournament. Canada's experience of the bigger games and strength around the pool proved critical and showed the South Africans what they need to do. Canada used its team to the maximum and pulled together strong combinations that South Africa could only watch. The extra-man statistic proved tough for South Africa but at least it did restrict Canada five times.

Game 32, 21:00, men, ROU 6 ITA 5

Referees: Mihajlo CIRIC (SRB), Mario BRGULJAN (MNE).

Quarters: 1-2, 2-1, 1-2,

Extra man: ROU 4/10; ITA 3/7

Italy failed for the second time this week, dropping the match against a dedicated

Romania. Italy looked the better team, spurred on by nearly 5000 fans, in the early stages but Romania struck back in the second quarter.

GHIBAN and AICARDI were suspended on a double exclusion just before halftime as the game heated feverishly. MANGIANTE and MATEI exchanged goals on extra in the third but it was GALLO who gave of his best with a blistering shot from deep right to give Italy a 5-4 lead heading into the last quarter of the day. DIACONU scored a second on extra at 5:13 for 5-5. Italy took a timeout and could not convert but ANDRE-DINA found the gap on extra at 1:20 for 6-5. FELUGO tried to score off a five-metre free throw but could not find the target and Romania had the luxury of wasting 13 seconds for victory.

RESULTS

Synchro

Free Combination

1. Spain ESP 98.333
2. P.R. of China CHN 97.667
3. Canada CAN 96.167
4. Italy ITA 95.667
5. Japan JPN 94.833
6. Ukraine UKR 94.334
7. Great Britain GBR 89.334
8. Brazil BRA 88.667
9. Belarus BLR 87.333
10. Mexico MEX 86.833
11. Netherlands NED 86.500
12. Egypt EGY 80.333

Open Water

WOMEN - 10km

1. PAYNE KeriAnne GBR 2:01:37.1
2. SELIVERSTOVA Ekatarina RUS 2:01:38.0
3. GRIMALDI Martina ITA 2:01:38.6
4. PINTO PEREZ Andreina VEN 2:01:40.8
5. MAURER Angela GER 2:01:40.9 3.8
6. HEISTER Linsy NED 2:01:41.0
7. OKIMOTO Poliana BRA 2:01:41.5
8. DOMINGUEZ Margarita ESP 2:01:45.6
9. LYMPERTZA Marianna GRE 2:01:45.7
10. PECHANOVA Jana CZE 2:01:50.2
11. BERBASOVA Alona UKR 2:01:58.9
12. LAMMENS Manon BEL 2:02:00.3