

LEN

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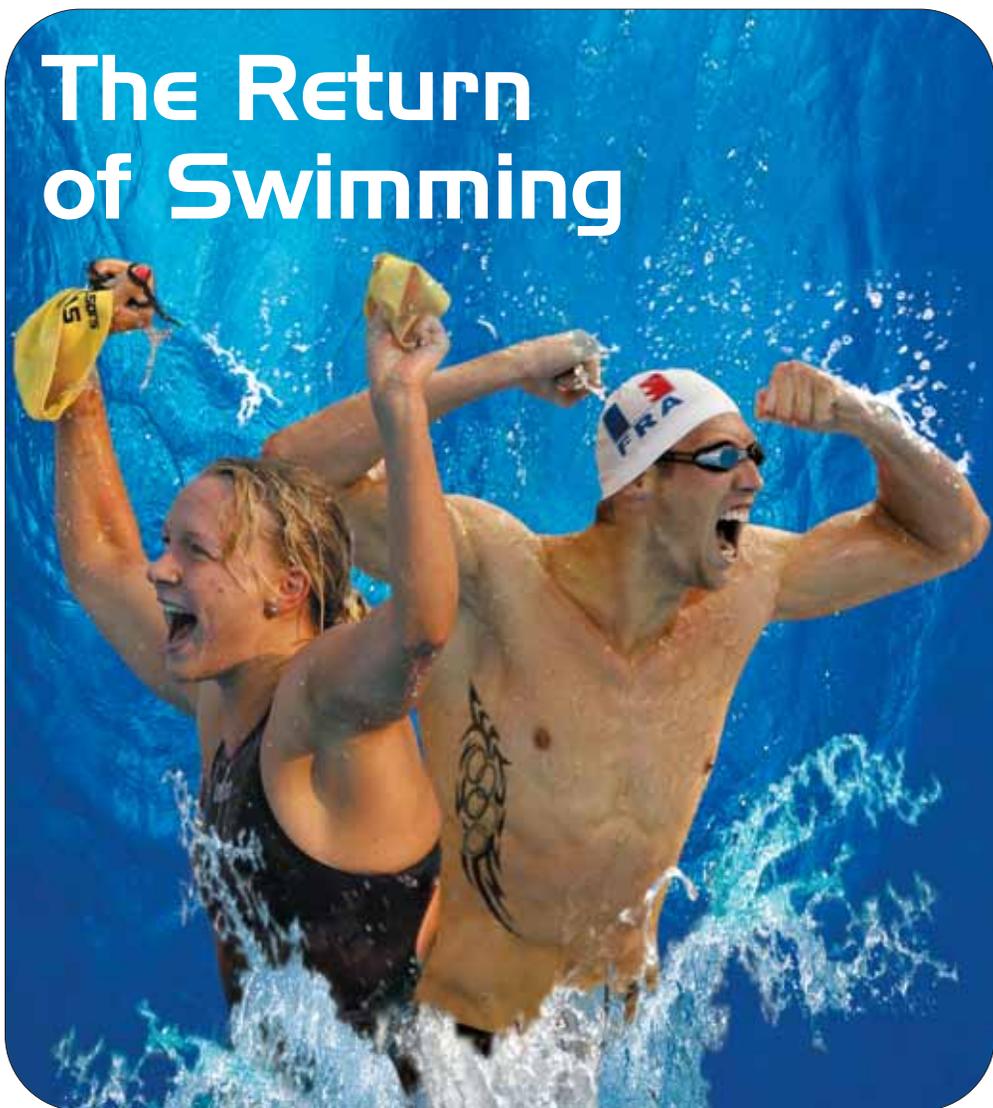


EUROPEAN AQUATICS HIGHLIGHTS

Magazine

N° 17 2010/3

The Return of Swimming



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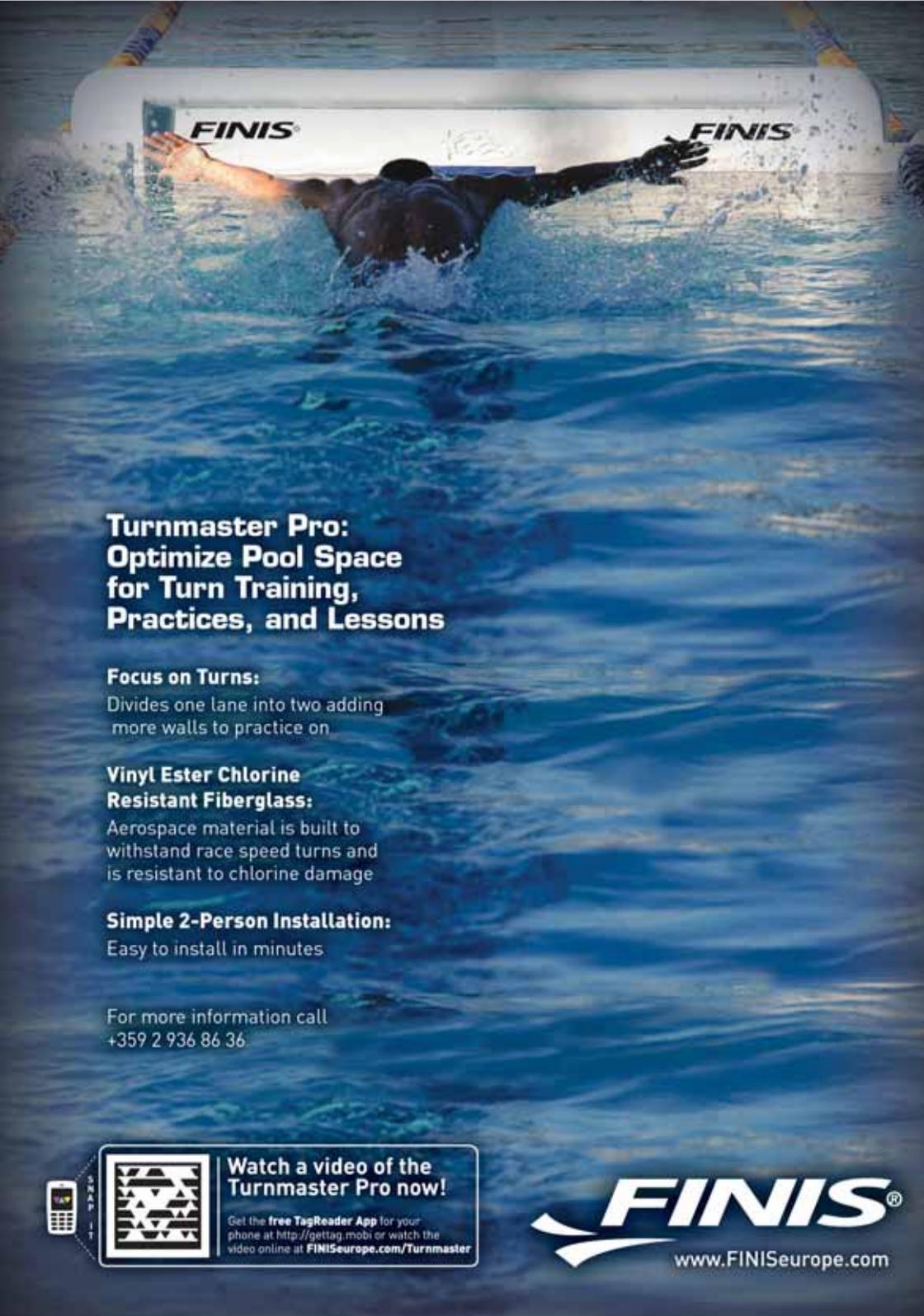
FINA World Championships Montreal 2005



Beijing Olympic Games 2008



FINA World Championships Rome 2009

A swimmer is captured in a backstroke turn within a pool lane. The swimmer is positioned in the center of the frame, with their arms extended horizontally to the left and right, touching the white lane divider. The lane divider is a long, rectangular float with the word "FINIS" printed in black on both ends. The water is a deep blue, and there is a significant splash of white water around the swimmer's head and arms. The background shows the continuation of the pool lane with lane lines visible.

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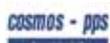
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Budapest hosted the European Championships for the second time within a four-year span. Hungarian swimming reaped some fine rewards, just see the medals tables, writes LEN Vice-President and head of the Budapest OC, Tamas Gyarfás.



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"Everything went quite mechanical, coming home with a medal every day." (Patrick Hausding) – "If you have sunshine or at least normal daylight the colour of the water is less dark" (Ilya Kvasha)



"From my mother I inherited the courage, from my father the strength in my legs." (Tania Cagnotto) – "I enjoy life, practise other sports, such as tennis or skiing and am a family-oriented person." (Christin Steuer)



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Singapore 2010
Europe is the best!



Records are a part of showcase events like the European Swimming Championships. Some people were afraid of not having any this summer but indeed we did have some. We had a participation record with almost 1,000 athletes coming to Budapest from 43 countries which proves that aquatics hold a firm position among the elite sports of the Old Continent.

Thanks to our wonderful athletes we also had more than a handful of Championship Records, a European Record, and just 3 hundredths of a second separated us from the celebration of the

EDITORIAL



NORY KRUCHTEN

LEN President

For the Record

first World Record of the season. However, if you talk to the swimmers they will tell you that everyone comes here to win their races, going for the medals and proving themselves as they lower their times, striving for perfection – records do not play a major role in their life. The best ones want to become Champions first, not record-holders.

The 30th edition of our European Championships brought more records. Budapest hosted the event for the fourth time which placed the Hungarian capital at the top of the "all-time host rankings". The organisers did an outstanding job, the beautiful Margaret Island, the magnificent facilities, the enthusiastic fans and even the nice weather presented the participants with an event to be remembered and with such setting an extremely high standard for future hosts.

Half way to the Olympic Games in London the championships generated world wide attention. We welcomed guests from other continents who all came to

see where European Aquatics stand – and I think they were convinced that our champions are still among the leading figures of the respective disciplines.

Another record is expected in the audience and market share figures: hundreds of millions were reached thanks to the extensive media coverage – the widest we ever had in the history of the European Championships. Besides the record number of journalists, radio commentators and photographers attending the event, people in more than 40 countries could follow the competitions live on TV and even more could enjoy daily summaries on other continents too. Our host broadcaster, Hungarian Television (MTV) produced one of the best coverage we've ever seen: the images in HD quality are major tools to make aquatics even more popular throughout the world. We all know that in the 21st Century an event like this is a product which has to be sold in a very demanding and competitive market but based on the outstanding performances of our athletes, the perfect conditions ensured by the organisers and the high standard coverage provided by MTV we offer our product with full confidence and all numbers and data show that it is extremely popular among the "clients".

On the other hand we should also see a championship as an event which leaves a strong legacy. Yes, today the profit is also important and with hard work a positive balance can be reached as the sponsors, the media and the fans all love aquatics. But the legacy does not exist only in the books. The memories of a European Championships will last for a long, long time: thousands of young children might turn to their parents one morning and say "I want to become a swimmer!" This is just as important, if not more. I'm sure, Hungary will also enjoy the benefits of this event in the near future, but the biggest profit will appear on the long term.

This is why I encourage all our member federations to host the various LEN Events: you will become more experienced and stronger – records show this, at last.

Balance of the 30th LEN European Championships

Budapest's happy returns

Based on first impressions, LEN President Nory Kruchten declared at the opening press conference for the 30th LEN European Championships that he was certain the organisers were well prepared, and he was completely satisfied. In reply I told him that I would be happy if he were to say the same thing upon departure.

Unfortunately, I was unable to accompany the President to the airport in the end, but I still found out that he left with the same feelings as those he expressed on his arrival. He is widely known to be a polite man, like all our other high-level guests, they don't like to complain to the host. Even in the light of this fact we could still draw the rather encouraging conclusion that the cream of European swimming was visiting Hungary for the fourth time in five years. Between 2005 and 2010 we have hosted one junior, one short-course and two senior European Championships, and are ready to face further challenges in the future.

On a separate but important note, it would be a fine thing if Russia, France, Great Britain or Germany, which all produced outstanding performances at the European Championships in Budapest, were to undertake an organising role that matches their achievements in the pool by actually hosting the European Championships.

There is no doubt that these major players have played host to a succession of the highest-ranking world-class

competitions, but then Europe is not the world... As far as the major events for seniors on the Old Continent are concerned, among the countries occupying the top seven places in the medal table, Sweden has gone the longest time without hosting the championships (1977, Jönköping), followed by Italy (1983, Rome, though they have held European Short Course Championships and European Water Polo and Diving Championships since then), France in 1987, when Strasbourg was the host city, Great Britain in 1993, Sheffield, while Germany held the event in Berlin in 2002.

At the same time it is almost unbelievable that from 1926 right through to today no city in the Soviet Union or Russia has played host to the European swimming family – despite being the only country to have won gold medals in all four disciplines at the Budapest event (not for the first time in the history of the sport).

Of course, this is not meant to be a criticism, nor any kind of reprimand, but rather an incentive, since these European Championships also proved – despite the absence of world records – that Europe is leading the way.



Comparing the European Championships in Budapest with the American Championships being held at more or less the same time we have no reason to be alarmed: there has been no decline since Europe took 17 of the 40 swimming gold medals on offer at last year's World Championships in Rome, though we await news from the Pan Pacific Championships in Irvine, California, where the rest of the world was due to gather in late August.

All in all, we can't really take pride in the fact that the representatives of the 30th hosts were unable to hand over the LEN flag to the 31st city in the closing moments of the European Championships in Budapest, because although encouraging discussions are in progress, no definitive decision has yet been taken on who will be the next host. No doubt the global economic crisis has affected everyone and there are plenty of reasons for passivity, but we all remain interested in the solution.

We are able to confirm, through our own examples, that holding the

*Pink Pantheon:
Yuliya Efimova (RUS) cuts a dash in a striking cap as she slipstreams back to real swimming on her way to victory in the 50 and 100m breaststroke*

European Championships constitutes a big investment in advancing the sport of swimming in the host country: we were only able to celebrate two Hungarian victories in Budapest in 2006 (thanks to László Cseh), while Hungarian swimmers came home from Rome with two World Championship titles in 2009 (Dániel Gyurta and Katinka Hosszú), and, with six gold medals in 2010, con-

firmed that it had been well worth holding the European Junior Championships in 2005, where youngsters such as Katinka Hosszú, Dávid and Evelyn Verrasztó, Zsuzsanna Jakabos and Gergő Kis made their debuts, with great success.

Holding the European Championships – and this relates to every country – does not just enable the athletes to reach for the skies, but also captivates the home crowd, as the 30th Europeans, just like the one in 2006, were

Titans of Gaul: Alain Bernard retained his 100m freestyle crown and cheered teammates to four other freestyle titles

Predicti☺n

All medals

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
RUS	14	11	7
GER	14	8	5
ITA	10	3	15
HUN	7	2	3
GBR	4	8	9
FRA	3	8	2
SRB	3	0	0
SWE	2	5	2
UKR	2	3	3
DEN	1	3	1
NED	1	1	4
ESP	0	5	4
NOR	0	2	1
POL	0	1	1
GRE	0	1	0
BEL	0	0	1
CRO	0	0	1
SLO	0	0	1

From LEN Magazine 2010/2, published in June.

almost exclusively played out to full houses.

However, one big difference from last time was the weather: it didn't rain (beyond a few refreshing drops) this time. Right at the start LEN General Secretary Sven Folvik asked me to stay in daily contact with St. Peter, who – lo and behold – proved merciful.

However, you can't keep taking advantage of heavenly gifts: Budapest, and obviously many other swimming capitals, could only rest assured and happy if they had a world-class indoor swimming complex. There is no denying that the Hungarian Swimming Federation is ready to host the World Championships in 2015, but makes no secret of the fact that it would bid in order to encourage the Government to build the long desired and deserved pool.

One of the trump cards in this argument is that, in addition to the results achieved in the four disciplines, Hungary could also rightly hope for water

Pay☺ff

All medals

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1. RUS	13	7	8	28
2. GER	8	9	3	20
3. FRA	8	8	7	23
4. GBR	6	6	7	19
5. ITA	6	5	6	17
6. HUN	6	4	4	14
7. SWE	3	4	4	11
8. UKR	3	2	4	9
9. DEN	2	2	2	6
10. ESP	1	4	4	9
11. NED	1	2	4	7
12. NOR	1	2	0	3
13. GRE	1	1	3	5
14. BLR	1	1	2	4
15. POL	1	0	1	2
16. AUT	0	2	0	2
17. FAR	0	1	0	1
IRL	0	1	0	1
ROU	0	1	0	1
20. ISR	0	0	2	2

** two silver medals in 100 breast women for Rikke Moeller Pedersen (DEN) and Jennie Johansson (SWE), tied in 1:07.36*

** two bronze medals in 5km men open water for Spyridon Gianniotis (GRE) and Simone Ruffini (ITA), tied in 59:15.9*

polo success at the European Championships, since the men's team – led by Dénes Kemény – has won three successive Olympics, while the women's team, under the leadership of Tamás Faragó, claimed the world title in Montreal.

In other words, winning a bid to host a competition is not just a two-week experience, but may also bring about essential long-term conditions for LEN's 51 member countries.

Happily we have already managed to persuade the large LEN family to join in our tipping game. In what has now become a tradition before major events,

we ask the federations' administrators, outstanding specialists and journalists reporting on the sport to predict the winners of the different competitions. We summarised the expected results in the 2010/2 edition of LEN Magazine.

In accordance with our expectations, Russia finished at the top of the medal table, and the duo of Gennady Aleshin and Vladimir Salnikov combined magnificently – with 13 gold medals instead of the anticipated 14: the tipsters couldn't do anything about their women's medley relay team, having finished first, subsequently being disqualified for a poor changeover... Everyone expected Germany to finish second, without realising for example that they would have to manage without Britta Steffen this time, who was struggling with illness, and there was no way they could have anticipated the young Frenchman Yannick Agnel beating Paul Biedermann on the first day of the swimming events – which was also the prelude to a French victory parade, as reflected in the "real" medal table. In other words, people sitting in the VIP box were able to hear the national anthem, La Marseillaise, performed on several occasions by the understandably happy FFN President Francis Luyce.

The British are coming up fast as well, and while chief executive David Sparkes was looking at the island pool, he had in mind visions of what the London 2012 Olympics pool will look like. Perhaps the finest compliment from all the outstanding British athletes came from Hannah Miley, who – immediately after beating World Champion Katinka Hosszú in the 400 medley – said she hoped to compete in a similar atmosphere at the London Olympics.



*By Tamás GYÁRFÁS
LEN Vice President
Chairman of the Organising Committee,
Budapest 2010*

Budapest 2010 European Swimming Championships

Photo: REUTERS

Predicti☺n Swimming

Pay☺ff Swimming



GER	8	4	1
HUN	7	2	3
RUS	6	6	4
ITA	6	2	7
FRA	3	8	2
GBR	3	6	7
SRB	3	0	0
SWE	2	3	2
DEN	1	3	1
NED	1	1	4
NOR	0	2	1
ESP	0	1	4
POL	0	1	1
UKR	0	1	1
CRO	0	0	1
SLO	0	0	1

1. FRA	8	7	6	21
2. RUS	7	4	1	12
3. GBR	6	6	6	18
4. HUN	6	4	3	13
5. SWE	3	3	4	10
6. GER	2	5	2	9
7. DEN	2	2	2	6
8. ITA	2	0	4	6
9. NOR	1	2	0	3
10. BLR	1	1	0	2
11. ESP	1	0	3	4
12. POL	1	0	1	2
13. NED	0	2	4	6
14. AUT	0	2	0	2
15. FAR	0	1	0	1
IRL	0	1	0	1
ROU	0	1	0	1
18. ISR	0	0	2	2
19. GRE	0	0	1	1

British Bounty: Jemma Lowe was alongside Fran Halsall and Elizabeth Simmonds when the Smart Track squad was chosen for long-term development in their early teens in 2004; in 2010 that programme contributed to the Brits winning the meet among women





Back to swimming

The Hungarian capital has now hosted the European Championships four times since it got the show underway with a men's only event in 1926 (ladies gracing the water the following year). None are around to truly say which Budapest was best but after 12 days of action on Margaret Island and out at Lake Balaton what we can declare with hand on heart is that the saviours who answered LEN's S.O.S in a time of need and financial constraint are owed a debt of thanks by the Old Continent.

Here was a championship that did not have the kind of big budget now associated with world championships. Yet the 30th championship in history, with athletes from 43 nations competing for glory, suffered not a jot. Indeed, with a nod to seven days of fabulous racing in the pool alone, LEN's showcase was the first celebration in the world of the return of swimming beyond the shadow of suits now banned. The talk was of athletes,

athleticism, technique, torsos and tales fit to feed the lore of great sport.

Taking all sports into account – swimming, diving, synchro and open water, Russia took the crown, on 13 gold, 7 silver and 8 bronze medals, while France, for the first time in history, was king (its eight gold medals all won by men) of the race pool, Germany ruled the boards and Italy the lake.

In swimming, the return to textile suits and fair play on January 1 this year dictated that there would be no repeat of the 6 world and 18 European records from Eindhoven 2008 – even before the racing began. Indeed, no global standards were felled but Camille Lacourt came closest: 24.07sec in the 50m backstroke left him 0.03sec shy, by which time he had already pulled something special out of the bag for Gaul and Europe when he took down a shiny continental standard in 52.11sec over 100m backstroke to send shock waves around the world of swimming.

The Marseille Missile's blast was one of 31 championship records, 16 set by men, while Europeans ended their big event with 16 places at the top of the world rankings across all 34 solo events. Gaul's gladiators gate-crashed their way to 8 titles for the men's crown, while Britain's belles kept rivals at bay six times for the women's crown. France, with 21 medals, won the team trophy for the first time a league ahead of any

result it has ever achieved before. Russia, with seven titles, was runner-up, while Britain, in third and with 18 medals overall, celebrated its best result ever.

Lacourt was the most successful male swimmer, with three gold medals (50m and 100m backstroke, 4x100m medley relay), a European mark and two championship records to his name. Topping the women was Hungarian Katinka Hosszu for the hosts, her three gold medals (200m butterfly, 200m individual medley, 4x200m freestyle relay) joined by a silver medal in the 400m medley behind a historic first medley victory for Britain, courtesy of Hannah Miley.

If Britain's Francesca Halsall became the most successful British swimmer in the history of the championships (with two golds among five medals), then Sweden's Therese Alshammar's 2 gold, a silver and 2 bronzes took her international treasury of to 67 medals (14 golds among them), including

relays, at Olympic Games, World and European Championships. And the winner of two silver medals at the 2000 Olympic Games is not done yet: 33 in the month of the Budapest battle, she is now aiming for a fifth Olympic campaign, in London 2012.

Europe closed its summer 2010 account just before the rest of the world took to its blocks at the Pan Pacific Championships in California, though Britain, which raced either unrested or only partially rested in Budapest, returned home to prepare for its "priority" event of the year, the Commonwealth Games in October. The Asian Games will conclude the big long-course events of 2010.

In diving, Germany ruled the boards with eight medals, among them five gold: an outstanding achievement a year after the drought of Rome, when Germany failed to visit the podium. As was the case in the pool, when the medley



Home crowd support was spectacular as the sport got back to celebrating its athletes and the element they excel in

Photo: REUTERS





Hausding that also brought the title of best male diver of the championships and the first ever to achieve an incredible feat: he won a medal in all five events, two gold topping three silvers. Previous best was seen in Helsinki 2000, when Russian living legend and president of his national diving federation, Dmitry "The Man" Sautin, took four medals, three gold and a silver.

Worth noting that, as is the case in the race pool, the divers of today have a lot more to aim at than those of yesteryear in keeping with a growing competition schedule. Diving events provided one of the biggest controversies of the championships as athletes and coaches complained of the poor quality of the lighting for evening events.

In synchronised swimming, Russia, the sport's dominant force not only here in Europe but across the world, sank all before her. With Spain's Gemma Mengual, the star of Eindhoven 2008

after a four-gold success, Russian Natalia Ischenko worked hard but was untroubled by rivals on her way to matching the achievement of title-winning performances in solo, duet, team, and free combination. If she was consistency personified, then so too was the result in her wake: four silvers for Spain, four bronzes for Ukraine, the most improved nation in the synchro pool in Budapest. With those four crowns, Ischenko won more gold than any other athlete at the championships across all four disciplines.

The championships began in a world beyond Budapest, out at Lake Balaton, where Italy extended its rule of the waves in Europe. The Azzuri took home no fewer than eight medals, among them two titles, to Luca Ferretti in the 5km for men and Valerio Cleri in the 25km for men, their treasury helping to deliver the Team Trophy by a wide margin.

If Italy was the team of the lake, the swimmer who caught the eye was Olympic bronze medallist Thomas Lurz (GER), who in the marathon event claimed gold to extend the most phenomenal of open water success stories, his personal trophy cupboard now stacked with more international medals than anyone has ever won beyond the race pool. There were no double gold win-

ners in open water this time round, with Greece claiming the mixed team prize over Italy (as a time trials over 5km), while among women the result that no-one expected was the victory over 25km of Ukraine's Olga Beresnyeva in her debut race over the distance.

As Budapest prepared to wave goodbye for a fourth time, LEN was unable for the first time in many a long year, to celebrate the handing over of the flag to the next host. The 2012 event and the timing of that in Olympic year are yet to be decided, potential hosts thin on the ground as cities suffer cuts to budgets, both self-imposed and mandated by national Governments in the wake of the global financial crisis. Provisional dates of May 16 to 27 (around the time that LEN will hold its 2012 Congress in Troia, near Lisbon, Portugal) have been set in a year that see London host the

Olympic Games in July, while provisional dates for the 2014 championships have been set at August 6 to 17.

The LEN Bureau was, however, able to reveal that the 2011 European Open Water Swimming Championships has been awarded to the Israel Swimming Association and the City of Eilat on the Red Sea. Make a date with your diary: September 5th to 11th. That event will also represent the first European Championships in Open Water Swimming since the LEN Bureau announced independent continental championships were to be held in odd years for open water swimmers. Divers already have their own event.

Potential hosts for 2012 and 2014 will doubtless wish to know "what's in it for us". Budapest provides the answer to some extent. The bi-annual summer showcase for aquatic sports was not merely a success because great athletes, their coaches by their sides, stepped up and gave it their best but because everyone did, from those in the limelight

to the unsung heroes who work in the shadows to make sure that information flows and the stage is polished and the engine well-oiled. The helpfulness and friendliness of volunteers on Margaret island was exceptional, the value of their contribution impossible to overstate.

But the bottom line of Budapest's success is as stark as the black line that swimmer's follow year in and year out in pursuit of excellence.

Budapest 2010 proved what aquatic sports have known since Budapest 1926: you don't need the trappings of wealth to put on a spectacle that will have them on their feet and cheering for more. The athletes will do that for you.



By Craig LORD
The Times,
Great Britain



SWIMMING MEN

Predicti^{Smile} Medals men



	GER	5	2	1
	HUN	4	1	2
	RUS	3	4	3
	FRA	3	3	2
	ITA	2	2	5
	SRB	2	0	0
	GBR	1	2	1
	ESP	0	1	2
	POL	0	1	1
	UKR	0	1	1
	DEN	0	1	0
	NOR	0	1	0
	SWE	0	1	0
	CRO	0	0	1
	SLO	0	0	1

Pay^{Smile} Medals men



1.		FRA	8	4	5	17
2.		RUS	4	4	1	9
3.		HUN	3	1	1	5
4.		GER	1	3	0	4
5.		ITA	1	0	3	4
6.		POL	1	0	1	2
7.		ESP	1	0	0	1
8.		AUT	0	2	0	2
9.		NED	0	1	3	4
10.		GBR	0	1	2	3
11.		SWE	0	1	1	2
12.		FAR	0	1	0	1
		ROU	0	1	0	1
14.		ISR	0	0	2	2
15.		GRE	0	0	1	1

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG FATTIAY

Good days, sunshine, without the shiny suits: Samuel Pizzetti of Italy in action during the European Championships



Gaul has never had it so good

No matter which way you turned at the Alfred Hajos pool on Margaret Island, there was a Frenchman in a rush: 20 finals, 15 of them featuring France on the podium, eight of the golds for the best team in town, with Camille Lacourt cream of the crop through a backstroke breakthrough that transcended suits and only Paul Biedermann (GER) able to break a stranglehold on freestyle events dominated by the colour blue.

With 16 championship records among men on the scoreboard, France had reason to be the most cheerful, nine of the new standards coming its way as Gaul celebrated two prizes that had never come its way before: best male team and best overall team trophy at the European showcase. On the transition to textile-only suits, the change on the clock was unavoidably obvious: the new meet standards indicate that the continental is gaining in speed, while just one European record over seven days of racing, to Lacourt on 52.11sec in the 100m backstroke, tells the tale of the performance-enhancement in suits now banned. Seven of the 20 men's title on offer were defended successfully, nine went to new holders, while four were not defended at all.

There was no escaping the success story of the championships. The French gold rush came to a thumping conclusion on the final Sunday of racing when Frederick Bousquet in the 50m freestyle and the men's 4x100 medley relay in which the sprinter swam the 'fly leg secure the LEN Trophy for France on

points and placed it one gold medal clear of Russia. In all, the French won 8 gold, 7 silver and 6 bronze, 17 of those 21 prizes won by the men.

The front page headline in L'Equipe summed up the final relay and the overall (mainly male) squad result with a scream: "The Golden team". Le Coq of the walk was Camille Lacourt, coached by former French international Romain

Barnier at Marseilles, a club that accounted for 11 of France's 21 medals. The backstroke ace had been in the picture for a while but not the main focus of world attention. In times of 24.07 and that lone European standard of 52.11 over 50m and 100m respectively, the 25-year-old was a league ahead of the rest of the continent in the water, on the clock and in points.

If Lacourt doubled on backstroke, just one gold on freestyle dominated the swim headlines in France and around the world like no other in the week of Budapest. At 18, Yannick Agnel was still dripping in the gold of his junior titles when he rose to his blocks for battle against world champion and record holder Paul Biedermann (GER) in the 400m freestyle. The courage of youth paid off, Agnel holding off Biedermann for gold in 3:46.17 and prompting L'Equipe to devote its entire front page to "Agnel – Superstar!"

Courtesy of a tough selection policy aimed at instilling in France's future troops easy speed through qualification rounds in order to ensure passage to finals in a fashion that conserves ener-

gy for the bigger swim, Agnel was not selected for the 200m, and Biedermann stepped up to retain the four-lap crown in style on 1:46.06. Fans were not, as it turned out, denied a clash of 200m titans: in the 4x200m freestyle relay, France, Germany and Russia fielded their fastest first and it was Biedermann who handed over first, on 1:45.47, Agnel on 1:45.83, Nikita Lobintsev on 1:45.93 (a start that led to a 7:06.71 champion-record victory for Russia), all three men inside the German's title-winning time.

At the deep end of distance, Sebastien Rouault did the double: he became the first Frenchman in 76 years to win the 1,500m crown, and did so in 14:55.17, the fastest in the world in 2010 at that point (though Ryan Cochrane, of Canada, wasted no time in topping him, with a 14:49.47 victory at Pan Pacific Championships in California a week later); then he added the 800m title in a championship record of 7:48.28. Here was a prime example of an athlete for whom shiny suits were a nightmare. The FINA decision to ban bodysuits and non-textile was critical. "I asked myself the question whether it was worth continuing at all. The bodysuits did not give me an advantage due to my build. I was considering stopping ... If they had been kept, if the suits had remained, I would probably have quit..." said Rouault. Two of those who were winners in a time of polyurethane, Fred Bousquet and Alain Bernard stepped up to be winners again in jammers. Bousquet took the 50m freestyle in the fastest ever title win seen in a textile suit, 21.49, while Bernard retained the 100m crown by just 0.3sec, in 48.49, ahead of Evgeny Lagunov and French teammate William Meynard, just 0.07sec behind the champion.

It was Lagunov who led the Russian 4x100m freestyle relay to victory over France (and Bernard) on the first day of the championships, Daniil Izotov passing Bernard on the way home to claim the crown in the face of a paper exercise that suggested the French could not lose. The result contributed to Bernard being replaced by Fabien Gilot in the medley relay won by France over Russia on the last day of the championships.

Russia enjoyed two other golden successes, both Stanislav Donets (RUS), in the 200m backstroke, and Evgeny Korotyshkin (RUS), in the 100m butterfly, retaining their 2008 crowns.

Alex Dale Oen (NOR) also repeated his success of Eindhoven, and did so in a championship record of 59.20 in the 100m breaststroke to take the helm of the 2010 world rankings.

The most popular title defenses of the week, however, as far as the partisan crowd was concerned, were the medley victories of a superb technician called Laszlo Cseh. In a tight battle with Markus Rogan (AUT) until the last turn, Cseh claimed the 200m crown in a champi-

onship record of 1:57.73 and on the last day drew cheers fit to drown out the rumble of distant thunder when he claimed the 400m medley title for a fourth time to keep alive a fine Hungarian tradition and match the title tally of legendary compatriot Tamas Darnyi.

Cseh welcomed his latest success in typically modest fashion. The crowd did not, their frenzy and Darnyi presenting gold to Cseh a fitting finish to a fine championship at the complex named after the 1988-92 double Olympic champion's coach, Tamas Szechyi – and an historic aquatic outing for France, of which much will be expected when the clock ticks round to Shanghai 2011 world championships in China next year.

By Craig LORD

Photo: PETER ANDREWS



Another gold for France: Alain Bernard



Aiming to nail it: Aurora Mongel focuses on the fingertip battle ahead



French in the fast lane

The winners

50m

-  **1. BOUSQUET** Frederick FRA 21.49
-  **2. NYSTRAND** Stefan SWE 21.69
-  **3. GILOT** Fabien FRA 21.76

EXPECTATIONS
1. Bousquet (FRA)
2. Gilot (FRA)
or Bernard (FRA)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 3.
▼ 4. (HTS)

WR: 20.91 (Cesar Cielo Filho)
ER: 20.94 (Fred Bousquet)

Frederick Bousquet out-muscled all-comers in the 50m lung-buster, hammering home French dominion in men's freestyle at these European championships. Bousquet, the oldest man in the field at 29, hurtled down the Alfred Hajos pool in 21.49, hitting the wall twentieths of a second ahead of seasoned Swede Stefan Nystrand, the 2007 world bronze medallist, who clocked 21.69. Bousquet's French teammate Fabien Gilot took bronze, a fraction behind in 21.76. Bousquet, the 2009 world silver medallist behind Olympic champion Cielo Cesar (BRA), had gained silver in the 50 butterfly and – with Gilot – was to

finish the evening with another gold in the medley relay. France are so packed with sprinting talent that defending champion Alain Bernard and Amaury Leveaux failed to get through the heats despite clocking the 4th and 5th fastest overall times, with only two swimmers from a single nation allowed to go through to the semi-finals. Bousquet won by a clear margin, though the most decisive victories in history were those of Alex Popov in 2000 and Bernard in 2008.

"I came to these European Championships to win the 50 freestyle and I did it," said Bousquet, who in the semi-finals clocked 21.36, a championship record and the fastest time ever by a swimmer wearing a textile suit.

Thirty-one-year-old Italian veteran Emiliano Brembilla, four-time European 400 freestyle champion, returned for another European campaign but finished 20th overall in the heats, failing to make the semi-finals.

War Paint: Frederick Bousquet (FRA) limbers up in readiness to sink his rivals in the 50m freestyle

100m

-  **1. BERNARD** Alain FRA 48.49
-  **2. LAGUNOV** Evgeny RUS 48.52
-  **3. MEYNARD** William FRA 48.56

EXPECTATIONS
1. Bernard (FRA)
2. Nystrand (SWE)
3. Magnini (ITA)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 7.
▼ 4.

WR: 46.91 (Cesar Cielo Filho)
ER: 47.12 (Alain Bernard)

Olympic champion Alain Bernard retained his European title by a whisker to maintain a tremendous run by the French men's freestylers in the Alfred Hajos pool. With the 400 (Yannick Agnel), 800 and 1500 (Sebastien Rouault) already in French possession, the onus was on Bernard to match them and he set about the task boldly, pounding out the pace down the first length and clinging on for gold in 48.49 to deny the fast-closing pack. Russia's Evgeny Lagunov was just 0.03 seconds adrift in 48.52 and Frenchman William Meynard hurtled through from seventh at the turn to snatch bronze in 48.56. Bernard had demolished all rivals

at the 2008 Championships in Eindhoven, where he twice lowered the 100m world record which had belonged to Olympic champion Pieter van den Hoogenband since 2000. Bernard also mashed the 50m world mark. Budapest was a different story on the clock, his effort well outside his fast-suits European mark of 47.12 but what mattered was that the crown stayed on his head. Filippo Magnini (ITA), twice world champion and twice European champion, was fourth.

"To win the race you also need a certain amount of luck." – Bernard

200m

-  **1. BIEDERMANN** Paul GER 1:46.06
-  **2. LOBINTSEV** Nikita RUS 1:46.51
-  **3. VERSCHUREN** Sebastiaan NED 1:46.91

EXPECTATIONS
1. Biedermann (GER)
2. Izotov (RUS)
3. Agnel (FRA)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 4.
DNS

WR: 1:42.00 (Paul Biedermann)
ER: 1:42.00 (Paul Biedermann)

World champion Paul Biedermann bounced back from defeat in the 400 freestyle to retain his 200 freestyle crown, though he felt he should have swum faster. Dominik Meichtry (SUI) took the race out at a cracking pace but the German world record-holder, sixth after the first 50m, swept to the front on the third length and forged clear to win in 1:46.06. Nikita Lobintsev, a gold medallist in Russia's 4x100 freestyle relay, added a silver to his collection with a powerful finish which lifted him on the last length from fourth to second in 1:46.51, with Sebastiaan Verschuren (NED) capturing bronze in 1:46.91. "I

tried to begin faster, the time wasn't good, but the title is what counts," Biedermann, beaten into second place in Monday's 400 freestyle by 18-year-old Yannick Agnel (FRA), said. "I was faster at the German national championships in Berlin (but) I think I managed the public pressure well." Biedermann's winning time was more than four seconds outside the 3:42.00 world mark he set in a super-fast non-textile suit at last year's World Championships. Daniil Izotov, who outsprinted French Olympic champion Alain Bernard to bring home gold for Russia in Monday's freestyle relay, had to settle for fourth place in 1:47.14.



Photo: LASZLO BALOGH



Alain Bernard

How a champion prepares for victory

He's got a much more relaxed way about him. A reasonable heat, a more convincing semi-final (48.71, 2nd behind the Russian Lagunov's 48.38) that allowed him to recover his strength again – all part of the new feel to Olympic champion Alain Bernard. As such, the doubts and fears born in a relay that resulted in failure (loss to the Russians in the 4x100m) vanished on the way to the defense of his solo 100m freestyle crown. Alain found his smile again – as well as the ambition to strike big in the blue ribband final and taste sweet success for the first time since his Olympic title in 2008. Coach Denis Auguin was optimistic. "If he swims 100m and not 60m like in the semi-finals, Alain will be hard to beat," concluded the coach. "There are only two or three details to work out, namely the last 15. But, in the end, he will just try to enjoy himself, that's essential. During the warm-up, he did some awesome stuff with ease. We are getting there." Just 24 hours later, Bernard was champion of Europe once more in a very tight final. What followed was many happy words of a winner. More insightful is the

mind of the man as he approached the final, as our interview immediately after the semi-final reveals:

How do you feel after this semi-final?

I reacted well. I start well, I am calmer, I am in my element. My first 50m were good, I relaunched in the third 25m, I just have some difficulty at the finish. My performance suits me well, it is going well, I can feel that, I have strength, my stroke is more efficient. And much more pleasant... I got into the final 2nd fastest, I have a good place – and that's the most important.

Are you more confident now?

Yes. I needed some adjustments and reference points. Unfortunately, the relay set me right [gave me a reality check], if I can say that.

Did you feel more confident before the semi-final?

Yes and more free, too. This morning in the heats I forced it a bit. I wasn't relaxed enough. There was a bit too much time between the relay and this morning (a day before). It wasn't that easy. It was

important to attack these 100m in the heats. I am not finished, far from it.

Have you forgotten the relay?

Yes, I have completely put it behind me even if I don't ever forget anything. It is important to go forward. Now there is a final ahead of me that could go either way.

The Russian Lagunov and Grechin seem to be strong. Are you afraid of them?

Fear not! They are quite consistent, and they may look impressive, but they are not invincible. Nobody is. Neither me, nor them. It will be a fight.

William Meynard (48.82) is also in the final. Does the presence of another Frenchman change anything?

No. Except that if we can have a double victory, we won't lose anything.

Are you the favourite again? You are the title holder...

(interrupting the question) I can win this title. But I don't have to preserve anything, neither this title, nor the others. Nobody can take away what I have. As for the rest, all is down to what happens [in the final].

Before coming here, you suggested a sub-48sec swim? Is it possible?

Why not? But in the final, I don't want to chase a big clock and do things backwards.

Are you itching to get to the blocks? Even though I would love to relax and sleep well, I am looking forward to this final.

Will it be some form of revenge for the relay?

Especially a revenge for myself. As for the rest, we will see afterwards. But I am not finished, far from it! Don't you worry!

An interview by Benoit LALLEMANT, published in L'Equipe

Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH



The Bounce in Biedermann

Paul Biedermann

down on the speed of Rome but there is clearly more to come from the German.

He showed as much when racing Agnel in the 4x200m in which the aquatic gods granted us the spectacle of a race with Agnel and Nikita Lobintsev (RUS) off the gun. It was the world champion who proved the stronger man, on 1:45.47 to a French record of 1:45.83 for Agnel and 1:45.93 for Lobintsev. Biedermann's blast was the second-best ever relay lead-off split, behind 1:45.36 for Michael Phelps in 2007 (discounting non-textile suit times).

Biedermann noted a target beyond silver for his team: "I also achieved my intention to regain the season's world best from Michael Phelps." The Olympic champion clocked 1:45.61 at US trials the week before Budapest. The relay went to the Russians in a championship record of 7:06.71, Germany the silver in 7:08.13 and France bronze in 7:09.70, all of that comparing well to the 7:09.60 at which Italy held the European record between winning the 2006 European crown at Budapest 2006 and at the dawn of polyurethane.

Meanwhile, Budapest has allowed Biedermann, now the boyfriend of sprint queen Britta Steffen, to move on, a new level set. He will next race at the Berlin and Stockholm world cups in October and November before the world short-course championships in Dubai.

The most troublesome legacy of the non-textile suits era is expectation. The clock has no ears to hear, no eyes to see, no asterisks to mark time warped by circumstance. No surprise then that within an hour of the 400m freestyle final for men, the online edition of the respected German quality paper Die Welt was running the headline "Biedermann wins only silver; Gold For Relay". Silver out in front of gold because it carries the drop of "Only".

The rub for the German media was clear: Paul Biedermann, national sportsman of the year in 2009 after getting well beyond himself on the clock and beyond Michael Phelps in the water and on the clock and beyond Ian Thorpe on the clock as he stormed to 200m and 400m freestyle world crowns, had been beaten by an 18-year-old Frenchman on his senior international debut. The surface view was, as always: victor and vanquished.

In France L'Equipe topped the scale of hailing the new hero of Gaul with a full-front page picture under a banner headline: Agnel SuperStar! The photo of the young Agnel looking heavenward in thanks to Jesus Christ Superstar or perhaps an aquatic God who may have helped him keep his fingertips ahead of Biedermann had an iconic feel about it. Gaul had a new aquatic God. Inside the paper, the main headline on a double-page spread reads "Tomorrow's arrived". It always does.

Biedermann had done his best - he had never been quicker in a textile suit - but that, because of all that came to pass in Rome, appeared to be a pale reflection of expectations held in the main by those who want the headline but have no time for or interest in the explanation or analysis. Graceful in defeat, just as he had been in victory, Biedermann said of Agnel: "He deserved to win ... he led all the time. The 400m is not my thing this year. But I'm happy with how I performed and very glad with the silver. I started out too slowly, perhaps, and left my late spurt too late."



Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY



MEN FREESTYLE



Allez les Bleus!

The winners

400m

-  **1. AGNEL Yannick**
FRA
3:46.17
-  **2. BIEDERMANN Paul**
GER
3:46.30
-  **3. KIS Gergo**
HUN
3:48.14

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Biedermann (GER)	▼ 2.
2. Glaesner (DEN)	▼ 9.
3. Sciocchetti (ITA)	▼ 8.

WR: 1:42.00 (Paul Biedermann)
ER: 1:42.00 (Paul Biederraann)

Yannick Agnel (FRA), 18, fought off the challenge of world record-holder Paul Biedermann (GER) to clinch the first swimming gold in the Alfred Hajos pool on Margaret Island and the first major international senior title of his career. Biedermann, back in fourth for the first half of the race, stepped up his attack in the last 100m and narrowed the gap in a gripping duel down the final length. But he could not catch Agnel, the European junior champion, who held his nerve to win in 3:46.17, with Biedermann 0.13 seconds behind in 3:46.30. Agnel had seized the lead on the first length and, although Nikita

Lobintsev (RUS) had edged in front by the 100m mark, the Frenchman regained control swiftly. Gergo Kis gave the Hungarian fans an early opportunity to cheer a home medal winner with a storming last length which took him from sixth to bronze in 3:48.14 over Lobintsev, the 2008 bronze medalist. "Great! I wanted a perfect race for my first final at this level," Agnel said. "The competition was tough throughout the race. I had only an inkling of an idea that I could win." The German paid generous tribute to Agnel. "He was better," Biedermann said. "I probably increased the pace too late."



Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

The eyes have it: Yannick Agnel (FRA), left, and Paul Biedermann (GER) soak in the Frenchman's 400m freestyle victory

Biedermann shaved 0.01sec off the world record of the great Ian Thorpe at last year's World Championships in Rome when wearing an X-Glide for a 3:40.07 standard, one of 43 in eight days.

800m

-  **1. ROUAULT Sebastien**
FRA
7:48.28 CR
-  **2. KUBUSCH Christian**
GER
7:49.12
-  **3. PIZZETTI Samuel**
ITA
7:49.94

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Colbertado (ITA)	▼ 6.
2. Pizzetti (ITA)	▼ 3.
3. Kis (HUN)	▼ 4.

WR: 7:32.12 (Zhang Lin)
ER: 7:43.84 (Federico Colbertado)

Sebastien Rouault (FRA) pulled off a great distance freestyle double, battling through against German rival Christian Kubusch on the last length to secure the 800 metres title and maintain a great French run at these championships. Rouault, who had already won the 1500 gold, bided his time as 1500 silver medallist Pal Joensen of the Faroe Islands and Mads Glaesner (DEN) set the pace through the first quarter of the race. The Frenchman had taken the lead by the 300-metre mark but Kubusch was closing steadily and grabbed a slender advantage at 500. The Magdeburg-based soldier clung to

his lead and was just ahead at the final turn but Rouault was accelerating and stormed through on the final length to win in 7:48.28, with Kubusch taking the silver (7:49.12) and Samuel Pizzetti (ITA), the 1500 bronze medallist, coming through strongly in the second half for another bronze in 7:49.94. Defending champion Gergo Kis (HUN), bronze medallist in the 400 freestyle, finished fourth, a second ahead of Joensen.

"Before this final I had already completed 4,600 metres, so I felt a bit tired," said Rouault, who finished fifth in the 400 freestyle as well as winning the 800 and 1500, making that an under-estimate by 800 metres in six heats and final races. "I was totally exhausted at the end but it's fantastic that I still clocked a German national record." – Kubusch

1500m

-  **1. ROUAULT Sebastien**
FRA
14:55.17
-  **2. JOENSEN Pal**
FAR
14:56.90
-  **3. PIZZETTI Samuel**
ITA
14:59.76

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Colbertado (ITA)	▼ 4.
2. Stanczyk (POL)	▼ 8.
3. Pizzetti (ITA)	● 3.

WR: 14:34.56 (Grant Hackett)
ER: 14:43.21 (Yuri Prilukov)

Pal Joensen, 19, claimed a historic silver medal for the Faroe Islands and came desperately close to making it gold in pool swimming's longest race. Sebastien Rouault (FRA) denied Joensen the 1500 freestyle title when he overhauled him in the final stages of a gruelling battle, edging past his rival less than three lengths from home after Joensen had led the way for most of the previous 1,350m. Rouault, European silver medallist in this same Alfred Hajos pool in 2006, swept through to win in 14:55.17. Joensen swung on for the silver in 14:56.90 to clinch the first medal for the Faroe Islands in the 84-

year-old history of the European championships. Samuel Pizzetti claimed bronze in 14:59.76 ahead of fellow Italian Federico Colbertado (15:06.92), with Poland's 2007 world champion Mateusz Sawrymowicz back in the fifth place. Joensen announced his potential at the 2008 European Junior Championships when he completed a golden hat-trick in the 400, 800 and 1500m freestyle. And he gave the experienced Rouault a few anxious moments after the 24-year-old Frenchman chose to hold back a bit in the knowledge that he had a strong finish.

"I think that's the first international medal in any sport for my country, but in swimming that's a fact," Joensen said. "I don't yet know whether I'll stay long term in the Faroes because the conditions are not very good. I can only train on short course."



Island Race: Pal Joensen, of the Faroes, claimed an historic silver in the 1,500m free final



Yannick Agnel Racing in his own little world

How did you feel when hearing the first "Marseillaise" when standing among the big names either side of you?

It was really awesome. I always have the same feeling on the rostrum. I almost had tears in my eyes – also when I touched the wall, saw the time and heard the crowd shouting. I was extremely happy and relieved at the same time.

Relieved? You, the outsider?

Yes. Because with what I did in Helsinki (*junior European champion with 3'46"26, French national record, improved on in Budapest*), I knew that I had the potential to achieve something. That was my only individual event. It is one burden off my shoulder; now I can go on holiday lightheartedly and with a smile on my face (*after having raced in the 4x200 m*)

Is your tactic to begin fast?

Yes, to hold out and try to race throughout the competition in the lead from beginning to end. I did my race in my own little world without looking at the others.

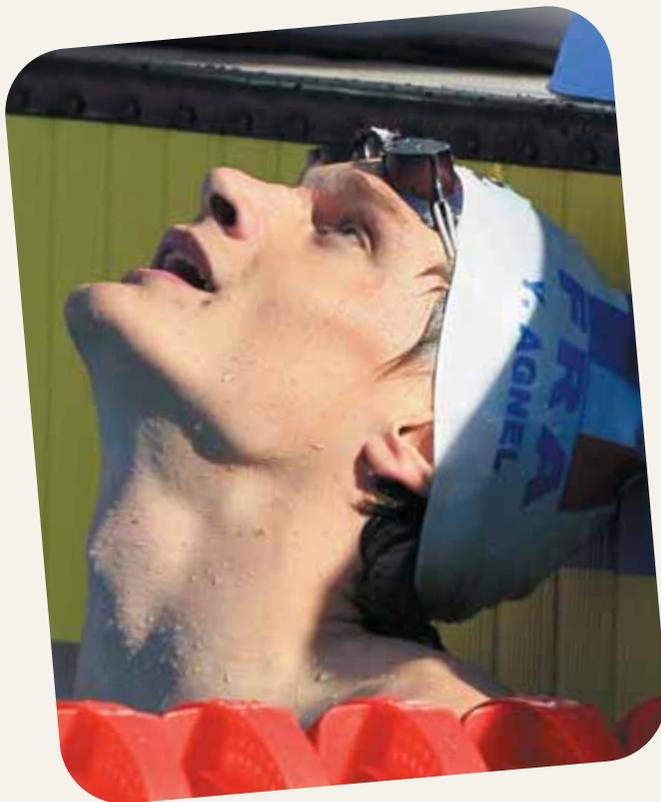
Is it easy to do?

With old goggles and steam, unable to see anything, yes, it is! Also, I drew on my experience in Helsinki, and then I just had to "live" the competition. I took an immense pleasure in swimming those 400m races! Especially, the last one. I had been looking forward to a tough battle with Biedermann, and it did happen. When I saw him coming back at me, it was really cool, I was extremely happy.

How did you approach the 4x100m relay then?

Singing and dancing, that's how! The relay is always a kind of party to live as a group. I competed with a smile on my face and with the concentration needed.

On the rostrum, there was a real discrepancy between your joy and William Meynard's happiness and the despair of Fabien Gilot and Alain Bernard!



"Will" and I, we were all smiles, as it was quite a big thing: a pleasure. These are our first international medals (*among the seniors*). For them, it was difficult. They have had quite a few upsets and now the silver leaves a bitter taste in their mouth. I understand them... I felt bad for them. But you have to stop getting worked up and making a big deal of that 4x100! A relay is, in fact, a celebration, a thing that you have to do smiling all the time, regardless of the outcome. That is how I saw it.

Is that what you are going to tell them?

Maybe not. I am ten years younger than them. It would not be appropriate. Nonetheless, we will live this silver medal together. This time the Russians were better. There are still quite a few things to work on. I hope that they will fully recover. With this immense concentration of sprinters in France, it is possible to put together a nice relay.

After this day, your presence will be awaited in the pool...

That is not something to give me a complex or put me under pressure. Quite the contrary, it is a pleasure for me!

An interview by Pascal GLO, published in L'Equipe

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Fame inside a 15 min frame Sébastien Rouault

At the end of the most important 15 minutes of his career, Sébastien Rouault finally clinched the gold medal over 1,500m – and he did so in the fastest time in the world to that point in 2010. It was a race in which his qualities of fighter and his tactical intelligence came to the fore. And to imagine that this man of Mulhouse, "made in the USA" and four years ago a silver medallist, almost quit the sport in 2009 ...

As Andy Warhol once said: "in the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes". Yesterday in Budapest, 24-year-old Sébastien Rouault didn't ask for that much: 14:55.17 sufficed. At the end of his golden 1,500m, Rouault, coached by Lionel Horter at Mulhouse, was even glad not to have surpassed the symbolic limit of fifteen minutes. He had done it only once before, in this very place in 2006, when he won a silver medal at the Europeans (14:55.73).

"It would have stuck in my throat, had I never swum within that time again," sighed the champion once the passions aroused by his first international title calm down. His emotions are palpable. The lips of the former student of Athens, Georgia (USA), are trembling. "They speak a lot about sprinters and less about middle-distance swimmers, so when we can have our little moment and show that we exist as well, it's nice", observes Horter's protégé. "And when you sweat blood for four years, it feels even better."

Four years that he modestly qualifies as 'instructive'. Looking back, the swimmer of Saint-Germain, coached in France by Jérôme Dimitri, continued to develop in the United States under Harvey Humphries's guidance from December 2004 (on his way to a BA in Business and Administration). However, in the American system, university competitions often preside over all else, so it is the day before the World Championships of Melbourne (24th of the 1500 m heats) that see Rouault leave for Australia in the aftermath of the NCAA finals.



At the Beijing Games, without the right suit and, most importantly, out of shape, he drowns (27th, the last of his heat on 1500m). "This kind of failure traumatizes you," he says. He took a four-month break when the era of the bodysuits began. "I asked myself the question whether it was worth continuing at all. The bodysuits did not give me an advantage due to my build. I was considering stopping... If they had been upheld, that's what I probably would have done..."

In fact, his withdrawal – he swims only four times a week – did him good. He took advantage of it in order to "breathe and have a normal student's life, without pressure". But a decision had to be made. "Swimming is not a profession, and I wanted to pursue my studies. But I didn't feel like quitting with a failure behind my back." A club member of Mulhouse, last year he started "the reconstruction on the ruins" with Horter before he left with Philippe Lucas of Saint-Germain in September, mainly to be closer to his family. It was an episode of five months that Rouault struggles to find the right words for. "I wouldn't say it was regrettable... Yet, parting with

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Philippe was a relief. Since then, it's been happiness itself. A club with a true club life, a calm atmosphere, a coach (Horter) who listens to you and discusses things with you."

And this coach recognized how important it was for this "charming and human" guy to continue his route between the United States – where he returns in September – and France. "In the water, he is an American," explains the coach. "A fighter who likes playing with the other swimmers," he adds. Those qualities were on display in Budapest. "Over there," added the swimmer on the eve of adding the 800m crown to his treasury in Budapest. "work is about surpassing your limits in your head. You have to be as strong there as in competition. In France, you don't have to surpass yourself so as not to burst. In the end, it's all the same, you have to work hard." Often 90km a week. Grounding for the battle of Budapest, in spite of "having his heart in his boots" after 5th place in the 400m at the start of the racing week. (5th). The only way was up, he concluded.

An article by Pascal GLO, published in L'Equipe



MEN BACKSTROKE



Lacourt on cloud nine

The winners

50m

-  **1. LACOURT Camille**
FRA
24.07 CR
-  **2. TANCOCK Liam**
GBR
24.70
-  **3. BARNEA Guy**
ISR
25.04

EXPECTATIONS

1. Tancock (GBR)
2. Lacourt (FRA)
3. Meeuw (GER)

PAYOFF

- ▼ 2.
▲ 1.
DNS

WR: 24.04 (Liam Tancock)
ER: 24.04 (Liam Tancock)

Camille Lacourt (FRA), who broke the European record in winning the 100 backstroke, came within an ace of capping that with a world record, missing the 50 backstroke mark by just 0.03 seconds as he sped to his second European title of the week. Lacourt, fifth in the 2009 World Championships, whisked down the pool in 24.07, 0.03sec away from the world mark set in fast-suited days by Liam Tancock (GBR) on his way to gold at the 2009 World Championships in Rome. "I must admit I was aiming for the world record but 24.07 is a very decent time," Lafour said. Tancock, bronze medallist in the

Budapest 100m final, had to settle for silver at a respectful distance in 24.70. Guy Barnea plucked Israel's first medal of the championships, moving up from fourth in 2008 to claim bronze in 25.04. Defending champion Aristeidis Grigoriadis (GRE) failed to make the final, having finished 11th overall in the semi-finals.

A head above the waves: in a blanket finish for the medals, Stanislav Donets (RUS) grasped gold in the 200m

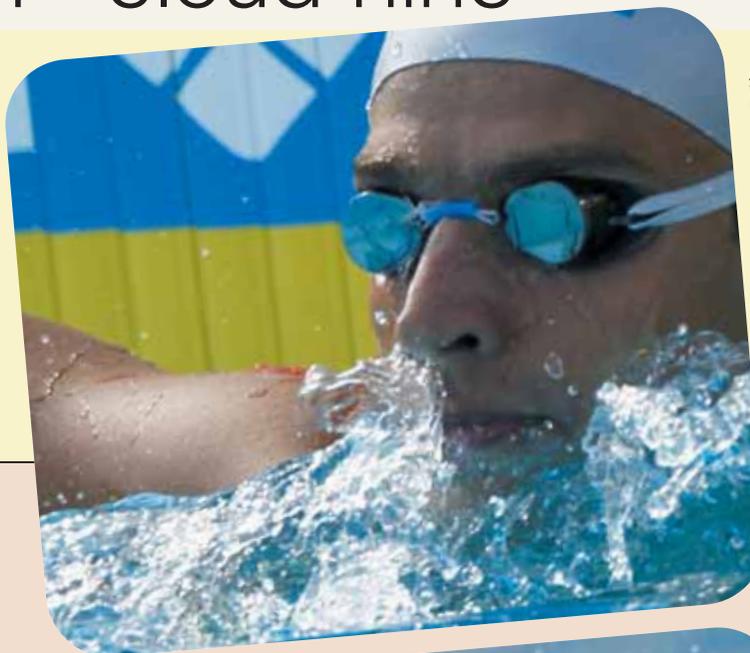


Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Tancock on defeat: "I got another medal and I'm not even fully prepared for this event because of the Commonwealth Games in October. If someone told me a couple of months back that I'd pick up a couple of medals without being fully ready I'd have jumped at it. I can't wait for the Commonwealths now," he said. "Camille Lacourt did a very good job but my world record still stands. It's nice to keep hold of my record but it's there to be broken and Lacourt is pushing the boundaries. When I'm fully ready to go it gives you someone to aim at."

100m

-  **1. LACOURT Camille**
FRA
52.11 ER
-  **2. STRAVIUS Jeremy**
FRA
53.44
-  **3. TANCOCK Liam**
GBR
53.86

EXPECTATIONS

1. Meeuw (GER)
2. Tancock (GBR)
3. Lacourt (FRA)

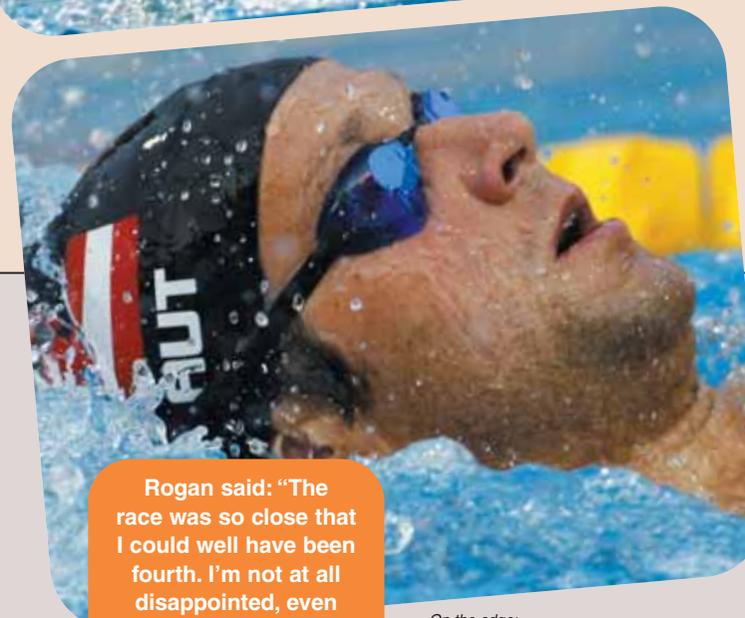
PAYOFF

- DNS
▼ 3.
▲ 1.

WR: 51.94 (Aaron Peirsol)
ER: 52.27 (Helge Meeuw)

It was arguably the performance of the championships. Camille Lacourt (FRA) posted the first European record of the meet and the second-fastest time ever, 52.11, that marking the first big breakthrough in the rankings since high-tech suits were outlawed on January 1, 2010. The rangy 25-year-old scored a runaway win in a time bettered only by Olympic champion Aaron Peirsol (USA). Lacourt won by more than a second, his 52.11 inside the 52.27 mark set by Helge Meeuw (GER) at the 2009 World Championships and falling not far short of Peirsol's 51.94 world mark set in Indianapolis at the US Nationals in July

last year. Lacourt had established himself as overwhelming favourite by setting championship records in both the heats (53.27) and semi-finals (52.58) and he had built up a commanding lead on the first length, which he increased inexorably on the return. Jeremy Stravius made it a French one-two, taking the silver in 53.44 and Britain's Liam Tancock, who thought he had been eliminated in the semi-finals, claimed a surprise bronze in 53.86. Tancock, the world short-course champion, swam only because Austrian qualifier Markus Rogan pulled out to concentrate on the 200m medley semi-finals later in the session.



On the edge: Markus Rogan (AUT) scraped into the 200m final to try to regain the crown but his prize was a silver lining

Rogan said: "The race was so close that I could well have been fourth. I'm not at all disappointed, even though I didn't manage to win the title."

"It's magic. I don't want to come down from my little cloud. Before coming here I didn't even know what the European record was. Then I put it in the corner of my mind. I wanted to swim a beautiful race to win, I knew that the time would follow. After the preliminaries I thought I could win the race but a European record was not a goal. What a fast race," Lacourt said.

200m

-  **1. DONETS Stanislav**
RUS
1:57.18
-  **2. ROGAN Markus**
AUT
1:57.31
-  **3. STASIULIS Benjamin**
FRA
1:57.37

EXPECTATIONS

1. Vyatchanin (RUS)
2. Donets (RUS)
3. Wildeboer (ESP)

PAYOFF

- DNS
● 2.
▼ 9.

WR: 1:51.92 (Aaron Peirsol)
ER: 1:54.75 (Arkady Vyatchanin)

Russian engineering student Stanislav Donets mined gold in a riveting 200 backstroke final. Donets dug deep into his resources of body and mind to extract a performance that defied the formidable charge of burly Austrian Markus Rogan. There was never much in it as the lead passed from Benjamin Stasiulis (FRA) to Donets, who had the edge on the second and third lengths. But Radolsaw Kaweck (POL), the fastest final qualifier, was closing fast and former Olympic and world silver medalist Rogan, last for the first half of the race, had stirred himself for the attack. It was still anyone's race as Rogan forced

his way ahead of Kaweck, with Stasiulis returning to the fray. But the tall Russian, 4th in the 100m, refused to be beaten: in a blanket finish he reached for gold in 1:57.18. Rogan, European champion in 2004 and 2008, grabbed silver in 1:57.31 to match his silver in the 200 medley. Stasiulis plucked the bronze in 1:57.37. Kaweck, who would turn 19 two days after the final, touched a mere 0.27 behind the winner but that meant 4th place. "I'm very tired," said Donets, after racing all three backstroke distances. "I'm just pleased that I had enough left to hold on and win the title."



Camille Lacourt

A missile made in Marseilles

It has taken a long time but, at 25, Camille Lacourt now finds swimming's biggest prizes within his grasp. The long, lean Frenchman, once considered skinny by his coach, illuminated the European championships when he swam the second-fastest 100 metres backstroke ever and obliterated the European record. Two days later he nearly pulled off a world record in the 50 backstroke, missing the 24.04 mark by just 0.03 seconds, as he nailed his second European gold medal. Few at these championships had great record expectations on their minds following the ban on non-textile fast-suits which led to an enormous record splurge in 2008 and 2009.

Lacourt broke through in magnificent style, combining elegant style with a powerful turn of speed to hit the wall in the 100 final in 52.11 seconds, carving 0.16 seconds from the European mark set by Germany's Helge Meeuw at last year's World Championships in Rome and leaving only the 51.94 of his hero, American Olympic champion Aaron Peirsol, to resist his challenge. He attacked the record again as lead-off swimmer in the medley relay final on the final evening of the championships and went through the 50 inside Peirsol's world record schedule, on 25.24. But he could not sustain that pace and handed over at 52.46, having made the decisive contribution to the French team's victory and earning himself his third European gold medal in three finals.

Lacourt did not even contest the 100 backstroke in Rome, where Japan's Junya Koga and Meeuw pocketed gold and silver. Having missed the 2008 Olympics in a year plagued by illness, Lacourt caused few ripples – except in the eyes of his coach – with fifth place in the 50 backstroke final, more than half a second behind British victor Liam Tancock. A national title at the 2007 French championships had been followed by slots lower than 20th in the backstroke events at the European short-course championships of that year. But there were more twists to come in Lacourt's path to the top and his cur-

rent coach Romain Barnier feels the different stages of the swimmer's journey played a very positive role in this.

Born in Narbonne in southern France, Lacourt's first coach was Richard Martinez in Font Romeu, a mountain resort in the Pyrenees which, among other things, served in days gone by as a high-altitude training camp for the French national football team before the World Cup. From Font Romeu he moved to Canet where his coach was Philippe Lucas, who has guided an array of champions, including former world and Olympic gold medalist Laure Manaudou. Barnier praised Martinez as an excellent coach who had instilled Lacourt with a fine technique, and Lucas, who helped his mental toughness and gave him the hard training yardage. However, Barnier said Lacourt developed a shoulder strain at Canet.

"He did lots of kilometres, ending up not too well. He had to change clubs again. His injury came from over-training," he said. But Barnier, a freestyle sprinter who competed at the 2000 and 2004 Olympics, prefers to see the positives. "Everywhere he's been he's been able to take the best out of the training,"

he told LEN Magazine after his swimmer's record triumph in the 100. "So when he came to us, basically he had the talent, the technical work and the hard race (training). The most fun part to do is to put it all together and I think that's truly what came tonight. It's not one day, it's not one year, it's a whole life. All these choices, basically tonight they started to make sense now."

Lacourt said he had begun to swim well when he was with Lucas but that his decision to join Barnier in Marseille had been the key to his breakthrough. "I'd been swimming for a long time but never found the link with the coach that I found with Romain Barnier," he said. Lacourt said he had lacked maturity but over the years had learned to adapt and take a more serious approach to training. Even now, he was here to learn and cope with the pressure of being the marked man in lane 4 in the race. "I knew I was talented but a lot of people had to help me to achieve this," Lacourt said. He was still talking about learning and improvement after his bravura 50 backstroke display, when he admitted he had had Tancock's world mark in his sights. "I'll discuss the areas where I still can improve with my coach. There's for sure a lot to be done to better my start," he said. Barnier said Lacourt, a lofty 2m tall and a modest 85



Photo: REUTERS / PETER ANDREWS

Liam Tancock of Britain swims during the 100m backstroke heats

Camille Lacourt (bottom) from France starts to win the men's 100 metres backstroke final

kilos in weight, had been "really skinny" and it had taken time for his body to adjust, which was why he had come through so late. The lean physique may account for the fact that, as Barnier said, he swam pretty much the same times with or without the fast-suit.

"The talent was there but it took him quite a while to get to that level. He wasn't ready at 18, I hope he is going to be ready at 25," he said. "In Olympic year he was grown up but he got really sick the whole year, so he didn't swim up to his potential. He was just waiting for someone to make him believe in himself a bit more."

Lacourt joined him at the start of 2009 and this year he posted a personal best of 53.29 at the French Nationals in March. Now he is on the brink of breaking the 52-second mark. Barnier has long thought the highest potential was there: "The final of the World Championships was the defining moment, when we sat down and I said: 'You can become the best backstroker in the world.' He said 'Do you truly believe that?' And (I said) 'What I saw today, that told me it is a matter of time.' And I think that moment was one of the defining moments on the way to today... And we'll see if we can do better one day."

By Derek PARR



Photo: REUTERS / DAMIR SAGOLJ

The new target Liam Tancock

Liam Tancock (GBR), world champion and record holder in the 50m backstroke in Rome last year, made a great start to the new textile-only suits season in the spring when he sped to the helm of the world rankings. In Budapest his results were always going to be couched in the colours of his season: Britain duty in Budapest would play second fiddle to flying the flag at the Commonwealth Games for England in Delhi come October, in accordance with national-team priorities.

As such, the 25-year-old from Essex and coached by Ben Titley at Loughborough University, was delighted with bronze (100m) and silver (50m) medals in Budapest, saying: "If someone told me a couple of months back that I'd pick up a couple of medals without being fully ready, I'd have jumped at it."

Whatever stage he is at in his preparations, he understood the full-on nature

of the storm ahead of him: Camille Lacourt. If the Frenchman's 51.22 victory in the 100m was well inside the 52.85 at which the world record had stood before the advent of non-textile suits, then his 24.07 win over 50m fell just 0.03sec shy of Tancock at best in shiny pants last summer.

Far from gulping, Tancock welcomed the new target, saying after the 50m: "It was a very good swim from a very talented swimmer. He's pushing the boundaries and it's nice to have someone to aim at. His time tonight was pretty special. I can't wait for the Commonwealths now. It's nice to keep hold of my record but it's there to be broken."

He would be trying to do just that in Delhi, where his loyalties will be put to test. From the red corner of England, he will peer across the pool to the blue corner of Scotland with a tender eye: Caitlin McClatchey, defending champion over 200m and 400m freestyle, will fly the Saltire (the St Andrew's Cross) as she goes.

By Craig LORD



MEN BREASTSTROKE



The winners

50m



1. **SCOZZOLI Fabio**
ITA
27.38



2. **AGACHE Dragos**
ROU
27.47



3. **STEKELBURG Lennart**
NED
27.51

EXPECTATIONS

1. Feldwehr (GER)
2. Terrin (ITA)
3. Dugonjic (SLO)

PAYOFF

- ▼ 12.
- ▼ 9.
- ▼ 7.

WR: 26.67 (Cameron van der Burgh)
ER: 26.83 (Hendrik Feldwehr)

Fabio Scozzoli made the 6th session of finals a double-gold day for Italy, winning the breaststroke sprint after teammate Federica Pellegrini had won the women's 200 freestyle. Scozzoli, bronze medallist in the 100, was fastest off the blocks and prevailed in a final in which just 0.61sec separated first from last, a most unprecedented of narrow margins in a major championship race. Scozzoli won in 27.38, with Dragos Agache (ROU) claiming silver (27.47) and Lennart Stekelenburg (NED), the fastest qualifier, bronze (27.51). Alexander Dale Oen (NOR) did not get away cleanly at the start, leaving himself too

much to do to catch the leaders. He almost made it but finished 4th, 0.04sec away from adding a bronze to the 100 gold and 200 silver he had already earned in the 200 freestyle. Scozzoli, bronze medallist in the 100, was fastest off the blocks and prevailed in a final in which just 0.61sec separated first from last, a most unprecedented of narrow margins in a major championship race. Scozzoli won in 27.38, with Dragos Agache (ROU) claiming silver (27.47) and Lennart Stekelenburg (NED), the fastest qualifier, bronze (27.51). Alexander Dale Oen (NOR) did not get away cleanly at the start, leaving himself too

100m



1. **DALE OEN Alexander**
NOR
59.20 CR



2. **DUBOSCQ Hugues**
FRA
1:00.15



3. **SCOZZOLI Fabio**
ITA
1:00.41

EXPECTATIONS

1. Duboscq (FRA)
2. Dale Oen (NOR)
3. Borysik (UKR)

PAYOFF

- ▼ 2.
- ▲ 1.
- ▼ 8.

WR: 58.58 (Brenton Rickard)
ER: 58.65 (Hugues Duboscq)

Olympic silver medallist Alexander Dale Oen (NOR) dominated the final, his victory never really in doubt as he stretched clear of his nearest rival by nearly a second to retain his European title. The first Norwegian to win a European title in 2008, he had lowered his own championship record to 59.29 in the semi-finals before taking the mark down to 59.20 for the crown. In his wake, Frenchman Hugues Duboscq (1:00.15) and Fabio Scozzoli (ITA), third in 1:00.41. "Prior to the European Championships I wanted to swim under one minute. After yesterday's good result in the heats I wanted to improve

on that," Dale Oen said. Gold in this event continued to elude Duboscq, who was turning 29 before the end of August. The Frenchman's tally for the 100 breaststroke now comprises two Olympic bronze medals, a world silver and bronze, and three European silvers and one bronze. "Today Alexander was simply unbeatable, he is in great shape," Duboscq, European record holder on 58.64 in a fast suit and silver medallist at the 2009 World Championships behind Australia's Brenton Rickard.

200m



1. **GYURTA Daniel**
HUN
2:08.95 CR



2. **DALE OEN Alexander**
NOR
2:09.68



3. **DUBOSCQ Hugues**
FRA
2:11.03

EXPECTATIONS

1. Gyurta (HUN)
2. Borysik (UKR)
3. Falko (RUS)

PAYOFF

- 1.
- DNS
- ▼ 4.

WR: 2:07.31 (Christian Sprenger)
ER: 2:07.64 (Daniel Gyurta)

Daniel Gyurta extended his rule in the pool, rousing acclaim by the Hungarian crowd as he gathered in the European title a year after winning the world crown. Gyurta, comfortably fastest in heats and semi-finals, made his strength tell in the middle stages of the race to beat 100 breaststroke master Alexander Dale Oen, his only close challenger, by the best part of a second. An Olympic silver medallist at only 15 back in 2004, Gyurta has matured into a mighty muscleman and charged through to win in a championship record 2:08.95, though outside his European record of 2:07.64 from the old fast-suit

days. Dale Oen led for the first length but Gyurta surged past, leaving the Norwegian, who had already retained his 100 breaststroke title, with the silver in 2:09.68. French hardy perennial Hugues Duboscq, silver medallist in the 100, added another bronze to his medal collection in 2:11.03 ahead of defending champion Grigory Falko of Russia. Dale Oen and Duboscq were also second a third last time.

Golden awakening

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

"The first surprise to me was my time in the semi-finals (27.46), the second is today's victory," Scozzoli said. "This morning I woke up at 5.30 and thought what would happen if I won today – now I'm experiencing it."

Best man, never the groom: Hugues Duboscq (FRA) extended his big medals tally to 12 – none yet gold

Russia's Roman Sludnov, a former world and European champion and first man ever to break 1min, in 2001, failed to make the Budapest final, touching 0.02 seconds behind the eighth qualifier in the semi-finals.

"After the world and European titles I of course want the triple in London 2012 (Olympic Games) to make the Grand Slam of swimming. I think I'm on a good road," Gyurta said. "I had to swim the first 100m faster than before, I'm always strongest on the last lap anyway." Dale Oen paid due tribute: "Daniel is the king of 200m breast," he said. "He is so strong and was simply unbeatable today."

Twenty-year-old Laurent Carnol became the first swimmer from Luxembourg to reach a European championship final and finished fifth in 2:11.93. Carnol, a chemistry student from Ettelbruck, has been training with British coach Ian Armingier at Loughborough in England since last September. The Luxembourg coach is Miloslav Rolko, European 100m backstroke champion in 1977 for the former Czechoslovakia.





Daniel Gyurta

On the right track

One World Championship title, one short-course and then a “normal” European Championships gold medal all within one year - it looks like your career is heading in the right direction.

I think so too. I already have three of the most important gold medals and only the Olympic title is missing from the Grand Slam, but there can't be any complaints in this respect, and I believe we're on the right track.

Your swimming was still a little hectic in the 200 at the Beijing Olympics and the Rome World Championships: although it's difficult to swim the same race three times at one event, but you managed this in Istanbul and Budapest, perhaps showing a continuously improving trend.

True, I felt everything came together as well, and if you're asking whether there was some kind of technical fault, my answer would be that it's difficult to say. Of course you always have to correct and improve things, but the whole thing really came right this time.

Until now you've always won by finishing strongly from behind, but the Europeans could only see your back and even then from an uncommon distance - but at the Worlds and the Olympics the situation might be different because of the Australians and Americans, and of course Kitajima. How can you prepare for such close battles?

As time moves on, I'm becoming increasingly experienced - and if we're breathing down each other's necks everyone will know for sure that I won't panic. After all I'm the World Champion, at least until 2011, and as far as I know, not too many people have swum inside 2:09 this year, so I don't think I need to fear anyone.

Healthy self-confidence: a rare phenomenon for a Hungarian athlete. A psychologist has also been helping you to prepare in recent times - it's an eternal subject, but how big a role do they play in an elite athlete's preparation? Some

people say nobody knows an athlete's mind better than the coach, and others believe their presence is essential.

There is no doubt that nothing can replace physical preparation. Until you get that right, no psychologist anywhere can help an athlete to victory - everything is decided in the pool as far as we are concerned, so the main emphasis is on power. Along with my coach we have finally found the right balance, creating the ideal training schedule and eventually managing to carry everything out. Naturally this is not enough for victory, you also need to have a clear mind, you have to focus properly - and this is where the psychologist, who I've been working with a lot recently, comes in, to complete a uniform picture.

The great Kitajima dominated both breaststroke events over the

Olympic distance - do you have any similar plans?

My 100 is continually improving, I value my fourth place here very highly, because this was the first major final of my adult life at a world-class competition in a 50-metre pool. I think I held my own and will soon be capable of competing with the elite over the shorter distance as well.

What is the difference between the Dániel Gyurta who underperformed at the 2006 Europeans in Budapest and the 2010 champi-

on? Back then I swam 2:16, and now at the top end of 2:08. In other words, more or less seven seconds. I think that tells you everything.

By Gergely CSURKA



Seven seconds... Daniel Gyurta failed in 2006 when he swam 2:16; now he won the gold medal with less than 2:08 min

Photo: REUTERS / LASYLO BALOGH

Alexander's great challenge ahead

Alexander Dale Oen

Alexander Dale Oen was one of the big winners in Budapest but he feels he still has plenty to learn. The 25-year-old Norwegian retained his 100 breaststroke title in style and gave second-best only to the mighty Daniel Gyurta in the 200, repeating his silver medal achievement of 2008. The 50 breaststroke scramble was the only race which went wrong, when he left himself too much to do after a botched start. He caught the pack and looked as if he might win on the roll but was foiled at the touch and finished out of the medals in fourth place, just 0.18 seconds behind victorious Italian Fabio Scozzoli.

"The start was awful. I crossed my arms when I dove in, head came up and I lost everything there. Swimming, technically the last race was very good. I felt I swam really strong...but the 50 is all in the dive and the pull-out, so I lost today, that's the way it is," Dale Oen told LEN Magazine. But, all in all, it had been a very good week. "We're very happy, except for today's race (the 50). I was hoping to be on the podium," he said. "The 100 was good, semis were very good. Finals, in the 100 - strong last 50 but a little messed up the first 50, so I hope I'm dropping under 59 (seconds) but I guess I need to have something for next time too."

Dale Oen took the 50 breaststroke silver medal behind all-conquering Ukrainian Oleg Lisogor at the European Championships in Eindhoven in 2008 but the 100 has been his most successful event and he showed early promise when he made the finals and finished seventh at the 2005 World Championships. European silver in 2006 was followed by gold in 2008 and now, again, in 2010. But his most significant moment so far came in Beijing in 2008 when he became the first Norwegian to win an Olympic swimming medal, taking the 100 breaststroke silver in 59.20 behind defending champion Kosuke Kitajima (JPN). "I give my respect to Dale Oen," Kitajima said at the time. "This time I got to the wall first but on another day it could have been him. He is a great threat to me."

Dale Oen completely dominated the 100 breaststroke final in Budapest, winning by nearly a second from the ever-green Hugues Duboscq (FRA) in a championship record 59.20, matching his Olympic silver medal time and bettering the 59.29 championship mark he had set in the semi-finals. "Today Alexander was simply unbeatable, he is in great shape," Duboscq said.

Dale Oen mounted the only serious challenge to home favourite Gyurta in the 200 breaststroke and was the only finalist to finish within a second of the Hungarian world champion's 2:08.95,

clocking 2:09.68. The rest were more than two seconds behind the winner. "Daniel is the king of 200 metres breast," Dale Oen said after the race. "He is so strong and was simply unbeatable today. I have to train differently for the 200 event in order to improve my times. The 200 is always the beast for me."

The 100 remains favourite for the Norwegian but he also has ambitions for the 200, having twice gained silver in Europe. "I need the 200 to be one of my favourites," he laughs. "Gyurta has been very, very fast. The 200 was his race, he had the home crowd, home arena. I just heard, when I swam, the response (which) came from the stands, that was really cool. Yes, it was really, really fun. And this guy is very, very fast and he's going to be very strong in the Olympics, I think."

So what's next for Dale Oen? "Now I think we're just going to do one month of base training," he said. "Then we're going to do hard competition work-outs all the way through World Cup and European Short-Course and the World Short-Course, so this year's so short and the next season's so short, so there's no point in doing a long base. We're just going to do major power stuff and hopefully be fast throughout all the competitions."

And then on the worlds and Olympics: "Exactly. From January to the World Championships in Shanghai is going to be very, very tough. It's going to be a lot of hard training. Of course, that's where I will meet Kitajima again and hopefully some others and we'll have a pretty good match. London (Olympics) is a long way to go still, so I need to keep my head focused on the next competitions and what I need to work with. In the 50 I have a lot to learn and coming down on my stroke count a little bit on the first 50 on the 100 and be strong on the last 100 on the 200, so there's a lot to learn and luckily there's lots of time left." Lots of incentive too as Norway still awaits its first Olympic swimming champion.

By Derek PARR



MEN BUTTERFLY



An exhausted but smiling Russian

The winners

50m

-  **1. MUNOZ PEREZ**
Rafael
ESP
23.17
-  **2. BOUSQUET**
Frederick
FRA
23.41
-  **3. KOROTYSHKIN**
Evgeny
RUS
23.43

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Cavic (SRB)
- 2. Munoz (ESP)
- 3. Korotyshkin (RUS)

PAYOFF

- DNS
- ▲ 1.
- 3.

WR: 22.43 (Rafael Munoz Perez)
ER: 22.43 (Rafael Munoz Perez)

World record-holder Rafael Munoz, lucky to escape a ban after missing three out-of-competition dope tests in the past year, swung through for European gold with an emphatic win in the 50m butterfly final. The 22-year-old Spaniard clocked 23.17, to win from Frenchman Frederick Bousquet (23.41) and Russia's Evgeny Korotyshkin (23.43) but was well outside the 22.43 world mark he set in Malaga in April 2009 when the high-tech non-textile bodysuits were still legal. Munoz was allowed to swim after FINA, world swimming's governing body, accepted the testimony of his doctor that the swimmer

had been "psychologically vulnerable" at the time of the first missed test. However, a ban will be imposed if he misses another test in an 18-month period, which ends in August next year. The winning 23.17 just missed the 23.11 championship record of world and 2008 European gold medallist Milorad Cavic of Serbia, an absentee from Budapest following back surgery.

"After a few weeks of worries I am happy that today everything went so well," Munoz said.

100m

-  **1. KOROTYSHKIN**
Evgeny
RUS
51.73 CR
-  **2. VERLINDEN Joeri**
NED
51.82
-  **3. CZERNIAK Konrad**
POL
52.16

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Cavic (SRB)
- 2. Korotyshkin (RUS)
- 3. Munoz (ESP)

PAYOFF

- DNS
- ▲ 1.
- ▼ 17.

WR: 48.92 (Michael Phelps)
ER: 49.95 (Milorad Cavic)

Fast off the mark, Evgeny Korotyshkin (RUS) made his swift start count and romped away with the 100 butterfly gold as his pursuers closed on him in vain. Defending champion Korotyshkin tore through the first length in 23.91 to build the lead he needed to keep the pack at bay down the return. Flying Dutchman Joeri Verlinden, the fastest qualifier, all but devoured the gap on the second length but Korotyshkin clung on to retain his title by just 0.09 seconds in 51.73, beating the championship record of 51.89 he shared with former champion Andriy Serdinov (UKR). Verlinden bagged silver in 51.82 and Konrad Czerniak

(POL) bronze in 52.16. "My plan was to swim a fast first lap, about 24 flat. I finished as well as I could because I was completely exhausted on the last 10 metres," Korotyshkin said. Ten years after his Olympic triumph in Sydney, 36-year-old Lars Froelander (SWE) came desperately close to bronze, just 0.08 seconds adrift of Czerniak in 52.24. Froelander won this title three times – the first in 1997 – and was world champion in 2001. Though he was denied in the butterfly, he had already taken away a bronze medal in Sweden's 4x100 freestyle relay.

"It was very hard for me, not only physically but also mentally, because I haven't been racing at this level for a long time," Drymonakos said. "After this long period I am very happy to have gained this medal and to be back among the top European athletes."

200m

-  **1. KORZENIOWSKI**
Pawel
POL
1:55.00
-  **2. SKVORTSOV**
Nikolay
RUS
1:56.13
-  **3. DRYMONAKOS**
Ioannis
GRE
1:57.10

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Cseh (HUN)
- 2. Skvortsov (RUS)
- 3. Korzeniowski (POL)

PAYOFF

- DNS
- 2.
- ▲ 1.

WR: 1:51.51 (Michael Phelps)
ER: 1:52.70 (Laszlo Cseh)

Former world champion Pawel Korzeniowski once again proved himself Europe's best when he completed a golden European hat-trick in the 200 butterfly, beating into third place Ioannis Drymonakos, the Greek who was stripped of the title in 2008 after testing positive for a steroid. The 25-year-old Pole, world champion in 2005 and silver medallist behind Michael Phelps in 2009, took the lead from 18-year-old compatriot Marcin Cieslak on the second length and swooped on to victory in 1:55.00 ahead of 2007 world bronze medallist Nikolay Skvortsov of Russia (1:56.13). "The last 25m were

so tough for me, I almost blacked out," Skvortsov said, having dug out a silver to go with his European bronze of 2006 and silver of 2008. Drymonakos, silver medallist between Korzeniowski and Skvortsov in 2006, took the bronze in 1:57.10. He was competing internationally for the first time since he was banned for two years in May 2008, when a failed out-of-competition drug test from before the European championships in Eindhoven in March was revealed. Drymonakos stopped the clock in a European record 1:54.16 in 2008 but the result was annulled, the record never ratified.

Korzeniowski felt pleased with his effort but said he also had other ambitions. "That's the second-best time in the world this year," he said. "This year I fully focused on the 200 fly but next year I also want to try the 150 freestyle."

Thinking cap on: Rafael Munoz (ESP) prepares to fight again, for the 50m fly title after an anti-doping hearing delivered a final warning over missed tests

Photo: REUTERS / PETER ANDREWS



Yevgeny Korotyshkin

“Man, you’re a sprinter!”

His way to success was too long for the swimming child. Korotyshkin's mother was a member of the national team in the 70s, so Yevgeny started to swim quite early. His mother was his first coach then he swam with Vladimir Ermakov for a long time. In the past two years, Korotyshkin lives in Italy and trains with coach Andrea di Nino in a group with Milorad Cavic (SRB) and Jason Dunford (KEN).

How difficult was it to change your life?

I didn't think about it at the beginning. My swimming didn't satisfy me for a long time. The results stopped. More accurate to say my training stopped. I knew exactly what I would do in the pool tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, next week, next month. It was so boring... I changed coach and started to swim the 200m because the other student of this coach was also doing it. It was terrible. In Italy I was examined by swimming experts, they just watched the results of my tests and said: "Man, you're a sprinter!"

But who suggested you should swim in Italy?

Milorad Cavic. We did a couple of competitions together, maybe he likes me as a rival. I wrote a letter to his coach, he answered that I could come to Italy. Then I informed the Russian Swimming Federation about my plans in order to get a kind of support from them, but they let me know that I could go abroad at my own expense. I felt that I got a lucky ticket with an opportunity to go to Italy - that's why I decided that I would pay my own way, 'till I have earned some. Actually, this is a different way of swimming. I don't want to hurt Russian coaches, but everything is more progressive: the attitude towards swimmers, training conditions, training methods, food... I do a lot of work in the gym where I work with another specialist - he is working as well with the Russian basketball team ZSKA.

You were upset after the first final in Budapest - the 50 m butterfly where you finished 3rd.

Frankly speaking I intended to be 0.1sec faster. Anyway my time wasn't bad. My main event now is the 100m. I was very happy to win there - to prove that my victory in Eindhoven wasn't "by chance". We worked a lot this season. My coach Andrea Di Nino suggested that we go to the Netherlands for a training camp. You can use a special equipment there which allows you to measure different swimming qualities, the start speed, the angle of the body while entering the water, etc. I know for instance that this angle should be 32 degrees in my case.

Milorad Cavic didn't come to Budapest, why?

He had surgery not so long ago. Everything was well but one day he stopped swimming and said that his

back hurts him. He doesn't like to feel uncomfortable. I think it is not easy for him to have me on the neighbouring lane in the pool all the time.

Do you feel pressure from the side of Russian fans and coaches who want to see you winning all the time now?

I used to think that this is normal. You should accept victory as the predictable result of your work. It shouldn't be unexpected.

You look so happy every time I see you.

I feel happy. Of course, I miss my family a lot, my country, my friends. But there are many things in my life that makes me smile.

By Elena VAITSEKHOVSKAIA



Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

Back to the grindstone

Pawel Korzeniowski

The most medalled swimmer in Polish swimming history, world and newly crowned European Champion from Budapest in the 200m butterfly is reinventing himself after a period in which he replaced his long-term coach.

You changed your long-term coach just a year ago, stabilised your personal life. There is one thing you did not change: you still win international titles.

My first decision was made in Beijing. Perhaps I was the only one that did not swim 15m underwater. I kicked thrice and broke the surface of the water a few metres off the wall. I closed the gap while swimming and lost a lot again while swimming underwater. Swimming like that in the 50m pool means loss that cannot be made up. I had to rescheduled my training program, concentrate more on strength and swimming technique. For the last few months I worked with coach Robert Bialecki. There were a lot of changes in my personal life. I am more aware of the importance of mental preparation in sport since I am with Marta Domachowska (Polish tennis player, used to be ranked top 30 in the WTA ranks). One can say that psychology in swimming is not as important as it is in tennis but it is absolutely not the truth.

To change a coach who was behind your international successes seemed a rather extreme decision.

My current coach pays a lot of attention to swimming technique, we work on details that are decisive in important races. I improve my start and turns but still have a lot to do on that front. I don't lose as much distance during turns and underwater kicks as I used to. I changed my butterfly technique. I am trying to swim with longer and stronger strokes. I stopped swimming with a high frequency. I work a lot on timing to balance



Photo: REUTERS / PETER ANDREWS

stroking and kicking. I swim much more sprints. The yardage is lower but intensity of training is much higher. I swim many VO2max workouts, many 25 and 50m repeats. I wanted to work on my speed and it seems to be the right decision. I scored a personal best in the 100m 'fly twice in Budapest leading up to the final. It was a well-considered decision to replace my old coach. I needed more mutual understanding from the poolside as it is the only way leading to success. My new coach controls what I am doing at each training session. I always can expect good feedback from him and he has got a lot of very interesting comments. He looks after my style and forces me to care about details.

You gained more than one second over silver medallist Nikolay Skvortsov. It's quite a lot.

One can think it's a lot, one can think it's not. It could always be more.

Could you go to sleep easily after such race?

I couldn't sleep until 3 o'clock in the morning. You have no chance until your emotions calm down. I always try to control my emotions, to stop them from

burning me. If I am in good shape I win fuelled by my emotions but afterwards I always have to fight with them.

Do you think it was good a championship?

There was no world record, only one European mark but we have to be aware that we swim in the new, old suits. Many results achieved in Budapest are the best in the world this year.

What is needed to win an international medal?

Do what your coach planned for you and what you accepted. You cannot think about particular success. If you win a medal and you want to win it again the best way to do it is to forget your medals as soon as possible and get back to hard work.

How would you describe your idea of what it is to be a champion?

Never be satisfied with his results. Try to get better all the time. Always set new, more demanding tasks. And the most important is persistence, pertinacity, pursuance and self confidence.

By Leszek SCISLY
Plywanie, Poland



MEN INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY



Triple double

The winners

200m



1. CSEH Laszlo
HUN
1:57.73 **CR**



2. ROGAN Markus
AUT
1:58.03



3. ROEBUCK Joe
GBR
1:59.46

EXPECTATIONS

1. Cseh (HUN)
2. Goddard (GBR)
3. Kis (HUN)

PAYOFF

- 1. DNS
- DNS

WR: 1:54.10 (Ryan Lochte)
ER: 1:55.08 (Laszlo Cseh)

Home hero Laszlo Cseh triggered a frenzy of rejoicing amongst the massed Hungarian fans when he scooped the gold medal they had craved for three long days. But the shaven-headed powerhouse kept the crowd on tenterhooks as he fought to stave off a ferocious late challenge from 2004 champion Markus Rogan (AUT). Cseh, second to Markus Deibler (GER) after the opening butterfly leg, seized the lead on the backstroke and clung on to complete a hat-trick of successive European victories in the event in a championship record 1:57.73. It was the seventh European gold medal for Cseh, Olympic silver

medallist behind Michael Phelps in 2008, and the crowd roared their approval after the disappointment of defeat for their world champion Katinka Hosszu in Monday's women's 400 individual medley. "This was not my best performance but it was enough to win," Cseh said. "I knew that I had to turn in front of Rogan at the 150-metre mark. The last lap was very hot." Rogan, double Olympic backstroke silver medallist in 2004, took the silver in 1:58.03 and Britain's Joe Roebuck bronze in a personal best 1:59.46.



400m



1. CSEH Laszlo
HUN
4:10.95



2. VERRASZTO David
HUN
4:12.96



3. NEVO Gal
ISR
4:15.10

EXPECTATIONS

1. Cseh (HUN)
2. Kis (HUN)
- or Verraszto (HUN)

PAYOFF

- 1.
- (HTS) 3.
- ▲ 2.

WR: 4:03.84 (Michael Phelps)
ER: 4:06.16 (Laszlo Cseh)

Indefatigable Laszlo Cseh (HUN) completed his third consecutive European individual medley double and his fourth 400 medley triumph and was hailed as a mighty invincible in Budapest by adoring home fans. Cseh, thrice denied Olympic gold by the peerless Michael Phelps (USA) in 2008, reasserted his supremacy in Europe and led fellow-Hungarian David Verraszto to a one-two in the 400 medley after winning the 200 event, repeating his doubles of 2006 and 2008. Cseh, who also won the 400 medley in 2004, took the lead from Thomas Leberz (GER) on the second length of the opening butterfly leg and pulled

away to what all along was marked out as an inevitable victory, clocking 4:10.95. Verraszto, whose father Zoltan was 200 backstroke world champion in 1975 and European champion in 1977, came through for silver in 4:12.96 and Gal Nevo (ISR), fourth in the 200 medley, struck bronze in 4:15.10. Verraszto said: "I clocked a personal best. It is not easy to defeat Laszlo Cseh, he's simply the best." Nevo thought so too: "Always the same people, always the Hungarians in the top positions. I finally want to get closer to them, that's my great goal for the coming years, but it will be damned difficult."



PHOTO: REUTERS / PETER ANDREWS

Cseh's victory produced more than a push in the ticket sales: during the night after his 400m medley win, both on the website and later at the counters between the morning after and start of finals, enthusiastic fans spent 8.5 million HUF – 20% of the whole income generated at the gates. And they got what they had paid for: three Hungarian gold medals within 90 minutes, the best single-day effort ever by Magyar swimmers at the continental showcase.

"I knew that I would not have too much to do to win this race. This is why I swam very relaxed on the last 10 metres." - Cseh, who received his medal from Hungarian medley immortal Tamas Darnyi. Cseh actually broke Darnyi's Hungarian Euro-record for most gold medals in the continental events (it was his 8th European title, and he managed to double down the two medley events for the third consecutive European championships).

Never say Nevo (top): The Israeli medley ace (pictured behind Laszlo Cseh) is chasing a Hungarian tradition that will be 'damned difficult' to match

Back to Breast: the backstroke ace Markus Rogan (AUT) was level with Laszlo Cseh (HUN) until the last lap of the 200IM

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Laszlo Cseh

“You can't turn back the clock”

Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH



Was your victory in the 200 medley your closest ever?

I think so. I've always won comfortably at the European Championships in the past and this was the first time I've been pushed hard at the end.

Markus Rogan trained specifically to beat you on Margaret Island.

That's right, and he prepared for quite some time. After winning at the European Short-Course Championships in Istanbul, he went straight home, and the

next day, after I'd set the world record at 400, an Austrian journalist asked what I thought about Rogan having left already and therefore having two extra days to train for the European Championships in Budapest. And then came the other little bits of muck-raking – Markus is basically a guy with a nice smile, but you need to be on your guard with him. He really knows how to disturb your peace of mind.

What was the key to your success?

Clearly the breaststroke was decisive. Although I've heard that he said I started very hard on the backstroke and butterfly legs, and this was too much for him, I didn't particularly feel that I had put everything into the start, as I always swim at a similar rhythm here. There might have been one occasion, at the 2005 World Championships, when I set off even faster and reached the turn after the butterfly ahead of Phelps, but then I went into the race on the basis of "give it your

all and whatever will be will be". I was certain that if I could reach the turn after the breaststroke ahead of Rogan, then I would win – the trouble was I had still encountered some problems with this stroke the previous day. In the race itself however the switch from backstroke to breaststroke went very badly, but luckily I managed to correct it immediately. Markus attacked several times in the freestyle leg, but I managed to hold him off, though I sensed that in the last 15 metres I couldn't push myself forward with my legs, and my pulse went through the roof, but I kept thinking I would do whatever it took to touch home first.

Can you hear the roar of the crowd during the race?

To be honest, at most I pick up snippets of conversation, as you're solely focussed on swimming at the time, while deep down you are aware that thousands of people are rooting for you, and this thought helps you to redouble your efforts. I could describe it as a joint victory with the fans.

Are you swimming as you would like to?

No, not yet. I really hope to produce my Beijing form again – my condition was

perfect back then, and everything went right. I needed four months' rest to recharge my batteries afterwards, because I used an awful lot of energy to acquire the three silver medals and in the lead-up, especially given that I was still studying at university in the meantime. I had a rest, but find it very difficult to develop my muscles to the same level again – time moves on and I find it more difficult to recover after a tough training session.

You have mentioned several times recently that you are getting older, and are no longer what you used to be. Do you still hold this view even after such a victory?

Yes, you can't turn back the clock. Don't misunderstand me, I don't feel old in the sense of hardly being able to move my arms. My coach György Turi also believes my condition is perfect, and we do an awful lot of mental preparation for an important race, it's just that I feel that I'm no longer the 20 year-old László Cseh when forced to recover from a brutal training session.

Is that partly why you only entered the two medley events?

Exactly right. Although I really loved the 200 butterfly, I still have the film of my

Beijing races on my iPhone and have watched the 200 butterfly footage most often – but the reasons mentioned above are exactly why I can't take on this third event. The preliminary rounds and semis were on the day as the 200 medley final and clearly if I had swum the 200 butterfly before then, there is no way I would have been able to cope with the final sprint against Rogan. But I'd like to point out that I haven't yet given up on this event, if the schedule is right I'll definitely be competing again.

After the 200 and before the 400 I asked you what it felt like to have beaten the European Champion record of legendary Hungarian Tamás Darnyi, in terms of the number of gold medals?

And I replied that that this was the first time I had heard this fact. To be honest, I don't keep a tally of these records. It's really great to be mentioned in the same breath as Tamás in any context, but I don't train and compete to beat these records, but rather to prove continuously, especially to myself, that I'm capable of surpassing my previous best times.

By Gergely CSURKA

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MEN RELAYS



The winners

4X100m free

-  1. Russia
3:12.46 CR
-  2. France
3:13.29
-  3. Sweden
3:15.07

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Russia
- 2. France
- 3. Italy

PAYOFF

- 1.
- 2.
- ▼ 4.

WR: 3:08.24 (United States)
ER: 3:08.32 (France)

Russia reclaimed the European crown they last won in 2000 as Daniil Izotov outspurred French Olympic champion Alain Bernard to bring home the gold in a championship record 3:12.46. Evgeny Lagunov gave the Russian quartet the lead on the first leg and Andrey Grechin just held off newly crowned European 400m freestyle champion Yannick Agnel on the second before William Meynard pulled the French dead-level on the third. Izotov proved more than equal to the challenge and produced the fastest split of the race of 47.87 to finish nearly a second ahead of Bernard and give Russia gold two years after they had

Russian razzle-dazzle

suffered disqualification at the last European Championships. France took silver in 3:13.29 and Sweden, featuring 36-year-old former Olympic and world 100m butterfly champion Lars Froelander, bronze in 3:15.07. "When I look at the starting-list I feel really old with these young swimmers around," Froelander said. "However, as long as I'm good enough for a medal, I'll go on. It's still real fun."



"Our only aim was to beat the French – and that's what we did," – Andrey Grechin (RUS)

"We lost at the Olympic Games, we lost at the World Championships and thought this time it would be our time to win. Unfortunately we didn't. The whole team is not too happy." – Fabien Gilot (FRA).

4X200m free

-  1. Russia
7:06.71 CR
-  2. Germany
7:08.13
-  3. France
7:09.70

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Russia
- 2. Germany
- 3. Italy

PAYOFF

- 1.
- 2.
- ▼ 5.

WR: 6:58.55 (United States)
ER: 6:59.15 (Russia)

Russia, the 4x100m freestyle crown already in their possession, made no mistake in acquiring another, retaining the long relay title in a championship record of 7:06.71 and leaving the rest well in their wake. World champion Paul Biedermann, who had retained his European 200 freestyle title, turned the tables on 18-year-old Yannick Agnel, his French conqueror in the 400 freestyle, and put Germany in front on the first leg, with Nikita Lobintsev third for Russia. But Daniil Izotov, who had anchored Russia to victory over France in a gripping 4x100 freestyle relay, hoisted his team into a clear lead on the

second leg and Sergey Perunin and Alexander Sukhorukov finished the job for the Olympic and world silver medalists. Germany claimed silver (7:08.13) and Jeremy Stravius, 3sec inside his best 200m, overhauled Britain's Robert Bale on the last length to give France the bronze (7:09.70). Italy, winners at the last five European championships, were fifth. "This was a really good relay. That's how we like it," Izotov said. "The French had Yannick Agnel in their team but that didn't bother us."



"It was interesting to race 200 metres against Paul Biedermann but the purpose was to launch the relay well. I think we have a good team, especially for the future, because our average age is just 20." – Yannick Agnel

4X100m medley

-  1. France
3:31.32 CR
-  2. Russia
3:33.29
-  3. Netherlands
3:33.99

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Germany
- 2. France
- 3. Russia

PAYOFF

- DSQ.
- ▲ 1.
- ▲ 5.

WR: 3:27.28 (United States)
ER: 3:28.58 (Germany)

France dropped world record holder Alain Bernard but still had all the fire power they needed to win the medley relay. Camille Lacourt gave the French an explosive start, going inside Aaron Peirsol's world record pace at 50 metres for the solo 100 backstroke before handing over outside the American's world mark but still very quick in 52.46. Hugues Duboscq, Frederick Bousquet and Fabien Gilot upheld the French advantage over the chasing Russian defending champions to give France victory in 3:31.32, beating Russia's championship record of 3:34.25. Russia took silver in 3:33.29 and the Nether-

lands gained bronze in 3:33.99. Fourth-finishing Germany were disqualified for a premature take-over by anchor man Markus Deibler. Bernard retained his European 100 freestyle title during the week but was left out of the French squad following a crushing defeat in 4x100 freestyle relay when he was well beaten on the anchor leg by Russia's Daniil Izotov.



"My obligation was to retain the lead given me by Lacourt, because Bousquet and Gilot had already competed in the 50 final this afternoon. Our entire French swimming team could not have dreamed of a better conclusion." – Hugues Duboscq after France's last gold of eight in seven days

SWIMMING WOMEN

Predicti^{On} Medals women

			
 ITA	4	0	2
 RUS	3	2	1
 GER	3	2	0
 HUN	3	1	1
 GBR	2	4	6
 SWE	2	2	2
 DEN	1	2	1
 NED	1	1	4
 SRB	1	0	0
 FRA	0	5	0
 NOR	0	1	1
 ESP	0	0	2

Pay^{Off} Medals women

				
1.  GBR	6	5	4	15
2.  HUN	3	3	2	8
3.  SWE	3	2	3	8
4.  RUS	3	0	0	3
5.  DEN	2	2	2	6
6.  GER	1	2	2	5
7.  BLR	1	1	0	2
8.  ITA	1	0	1	2
9.  FRA	0	3	1	4
10.  NED	0	1	1	2
11.  IRE	0	1	0	1
12.  NOR	0	1	0	1
13.  ESP	0	0	3	3

Photo: RELUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

Modest show: illness prevented Federica Pellegrini from the usual 200-400m double



Common wealth for GB

For a team proclaiming their sights were set on another meet two months away, Britain did a remarkable job in topping the women's medal table at the European Championships, winning twice as many titles as their nearest rivals. The ultimate goal is obviously the 2012 London Olympics but this year's target for Britain's swimmers was set for the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in October and the team swam these championships in the midst of varying stages of heavy training, relatively unrested and untapered.

This appeared to do little to shackle the likes of Francesca Halsall, Hannah Miley, Gemma Spofforth and Elizabeth Simmonds, while double Olympic champion Rebecca Adlington awoke from the nightmare of an 800 to a new golden dawn in the 400 freestyle. That quintet plus Spofforth's and Halsall's medley relay colleagues Kate Haywood and



Amy Smith yielded an unprecedented European bounty for Britain of six titles, twice the total compiled among the women by hosts Hungary, whose rapturously received golden treble was matched by Sweden and Russia.

World champion Katinka Hosszu established herself as the most prolific women's gold medallist, roared home by a deliriously ecstatic local crowd to lead Hungarian one-two triumphs in the 200 individual medley and 200 butterfly – first with Evelyn Verraszto and second with Zsuzsanna Jakabos – and play her part in the 4x200 freestyle relay which pulled off a stunning last-gasp victory over France. But Britain, giving an inkling of what was to come, thwarted Hosszu and Jakabos in the first women's final of the championships when Miley upstaged the home favourites in the 400 individual medley, the event won by Hosszu at the 2009 World Championships in Rome.

World champion Yuliya Efimova proved in a class of her own in the 50 and 100 breaststroke but was denied triple gold when she took over a fraction too soon in the concluding medley relay, provoking the disqualification of first-finishers Russia and providing Britain with their sixth title.

Lotte Friis (DEN) dominated the 800 and 1500 freestyle and bagged a bronze in the 400, despite insisting that the lower distance was too short for her, and evergreen sprinter Therese Alshammar (SWE), a double Olympic silver medallist in 2000, also claimed double gold, winning the 50 butterfly and 50 freestyle as well as claiming bronze in the 100 butterfly, won by fellow-Swedish world record-holder Sarah Sjoestroem, a rival half her age.

Alshammar also collected a silver in the 4x100 medley relay and bronze in the 4x100 freestyle relay to hoist her overall medal tally in Olympic Games and World and European Championships to a record 67, one above the previous summit of Martina Moravcova (SVK).

Alshammar and Halsall were the most prolific women's medal-winners of

the week with five apiece in the Alfred Hajos pool, Halsall achieving this feat – unmatched by any other Briton in the 84-year history of these championships – with gold in the 100 freestyle and 4x100 medley relay, silver in the 100 butterfly and 4x100 freestyle relay and bronze in the 50 freestyle.

Simmonds and Spofforth asserted British rule in women's backstroke, with each winning once in emphatic one-two triumphs, Simmonds in the 200 and world champion Spofforth in the 100, and Adlington banished the distress of defeat in the 800, the event in which she had made her international mark with a silver medal in the same pool in 2006, bouncing back with a morale-boosting victory in the 400. Italian rival Federica Pellegrini, the world champion and world record-holder, pulled out of the 400 with a fever but had already stamped her mark with a powerful win in the 200 freestyle and a bronze medal on her first big championship outing in the 800 freestyle. There was also gold for Aliaksandra Herasimenia (BLR) in the 50 backstroke, along with silver in the 100 freestyle.

These were good championships for older swimmers but a handful of younger contenders made their presence felt too. Sjoestroem, who turned 17 two days after the championships, added the European 100 butterfly title to the world crown she won last year and also revealed her growing potential in the 100 freestyle and 50 butterfly, even though two fourth places left her off the podium. Anastasia Chaun (RUS), 21, won the 200 breaststroke in the absence of Efimova, who did not contest the longer event because of shoulder trouble. Sixteen-year-old Silke Lippok (GER), who won five gold medals at this year's European Junior Championships, gave Pellegrini a run for her money with the silver medal in the 200 freestyle. Nineteen-year-old Ophelie Etienne (FRA) collected three silver medals in the 400 and 800 freestyle and 4x200 freestyle relay and 17-year-old Grainne Murphy (IRE), a former triple European junior champion, also made waves in the distance freestyle events, scooping the silver in the 1500.

There were several significant absentees, most notably world and Olympic champion Britta Steffen (GER), who has had a year complicated by illness and injury. Three of the Dutch Olympic and world 4x100 freestyle relay gold medallists – Marleen Veldhuis, who had a baby in June, Inge Dekker, who had a shoulder injury, and Ranomi Kromowidjojo, who was recovering from

Photo: PETER ANDREWS



Back-to-back: Elizabeth Simmonds (top) and Gemma Spofforth gave Britain two gold-silver finishes, Simmonds taking the 200m crown, her debut international victory, Spofforth the 100m to back up her world title of 2009

meningitis – were also missing. The fourth member of that illustrious quartet, Femke Heemskerk, claimed bronze in the 100 freestyle, while team-mate Hinkelien Schreuder took the silver in the 50 freestyle. There has also been talk of a comeback by former Olympic and world champion Inge de Bruijn, their Dutch compatriot, to add another element to the mix as the swimming world looks forward to the 2011 World Championships in Shanghai and the 2012 Olympics in London, when the United States, Australia and the rest rejoin the fray and the battles reach their highest intensity.

By Derek PARR



The winners

50m

-  **1. ALSHAMMAR**
Therese
SWE
24.45
-  **2. SCHREUDER**
Hinkelien
NED
24.66
-  **3. HALSALL**
Francesca
GBR
24.67

EXPECTATIONS
1. Steffen (GER)
2. Alshammar (SWE)
3. Kromowidjojo (NED)

PAYOFF
DNS
▲ 1.
DNS

WR: 23.73 (Britta Steffen)
ER: 23.73 (Britta Steffen)

Therese Alshammar (SWE) defied the years and scattered her younger rivals, sprinting to her second gold medal of the championships in the 50 freestyle, the event in which she had claimed Olympic silver 10 years before at the Sydney Games. Alshammar, days away from her 33rd birthday, held the edge throughout the one-length dash and never looked like being caught. Swift but controlled, she swept home in 24.45, well clear, as Hinkelien Schreuder (NED) pipped Francesca Halsall (GBR) for the silver by just 0.01 seconds, with Dorothea Brandt (GER) just 0.04 away but outside the medals. Schreuder clocked

24.66 for silver and Halsall 24.67 for bronze. Alshammar, who had already regained the 50 butterfly title, claimed the 50 freestyle crown for the fourth time, having previously won in 2000, 2002 and 2004, and was later to finish with a silver in the medley relay to follow bronzes in the 100 butterfly and 4x100 freestyle relay. Alshammar has now appeared in the last eight championship 50m free finals – and won a medal every time.

100m

-  **1. HALSALL**
Francesca
GBR
53.58
-  **2. HERASIMENIA**
Aliaksandra
BLR
53.82
-  **3. HEEMSKERK**
Femke
NED
54.12

EXPECTATIONS
1. Steffen (GER)
2. Halsall (GBR)
3. Kromowidjojo (NED)

PAYOFF
DNS
▲ 1.
DNS

WR: 52.07 (Britta Steffen)
ER: 52.07 (Britta Steffen)

Francesca Halsall kept Britain's women on track with a third title for her team in as many days after Hannah Miley (400 individual medley) and Elizabeth Simmonds (200 backstroke) had raced to gold. Halsall, silver medallist behind world record-holder Britta Steffen at the Roma2009 World Championships, led throughout and zipped home in 53.58 to bring back the European 100 freestyle crown to Britain 11 years after Susan Rolph won it at Istanbul 1999. "I knew that I had to get out very fast because this is my strength," said Halsall, who like others in the British team swam

unrested in the midst of preparations for October's Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. Olympic and world champion Steffen decided against competing in Budapest after a year troubled by illness and injury but her championship record 53.30, set here in 2006, just remained intact. Aliaksandra Herasimenia, who served a doping ban from 2003-05, gave Belarus a first outing on the podium, in 53.82 for silver. Femke Heemskerker, shouldering Dutch hopes in the absence of fellow Dutch relay world beaters Marleen Veldhuis, Ranomi Kromowidjojo and Inge Dekker, pipped Sweden's Sarah Sjoestroem by 0.04 seconds to snatch the bronze in 54.12.

WR: 1:52.98 (Federica Pellegrini)
ER: 1:52.98 (Federica Pellegrini)

Olympic and world champion Federica Pellegrini (ITA) added her first European 200 freestyle gold to her Olympic and world crowns by cutting short the brave efforts of Silke Lippok, after the 16-year-old German had made all the pace from the outside lane one. European junior champion Lippok carved out a 1-sec advantage down the first length but the experienced world record holder inexorably whittled away at her lead. The gap was half a second at the last turn but it already looked plain that the Italian would hunt Lippok down. Pellegrini, bronze medallist in her first major championship 800 freestyle

earlier in the week, poured past and hit the wall more than 1.5sec in front, beating her own championship record from the semi-finals to win in 1:55.45. Lippok was fading but held on for silver in 1:56.98 and Agnes Mutina (HUN) overtook the luckless Camille Muffat (FRA) for her second European 200 bronze in 1:57.12. Muffat, fourth in the 200 medley behind a Hungarian one-two and denied gold by the Hungarians in the 4x200 freestyle relay, must have felt the hosts had it in for her.

200m

-  **1. PELLEGRINI**
Federica
ITA
1:55.45 CR
-  **2. LIPPOK** Silke
GER
1:56.98
-  **3. MUTINA** Agnes
HUN
1:57.12

EXPECTATIONS
1. Pellegrini (ITA)
2. Mutina (HUN)
3. Verraszto (HUN)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 3.
▼ 5.

While Britta was away...

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY



"I am not ruling a comeback in nor out," 2000 and 2004 Olympic champion Inge de Bruijn (NED) told the Dutch media while working as a commentator in Budapest. Missing too from the 2010 race were world and Olympic champion Britta Steffen (GER), troubled by illness and injury, and 2008 European champion Marleen Veldhuis (NED), who had a baby in June.

That last 10m really hurt. As a world medallist I felt a bit of pressure out there tonight but I think I channeled it well and to get that first individual title bodes really well for the rest of the season."
– Halsall

"Since we had to replace three swimmers I had to save the Dutch honour. I think I did that well because it's my first individual medal on long course."
– Heemskerker

Dutch danger:
Therese Alshammar, left, has history with the Orange squad but this time she kept Hinkelien Schreuder at bay

"My legs were already shaking at the start and now I'm totally exhausted. I gave it everything. I started the race very fast, which I clearly felt in the last 25 metres. But it's incredible to have got a medal."
– Silke Lippok, tipped for a great future by Pellegrini.



Francesca Halsall

5-Haul Halsall Tops Titley's Troops

At 14 years of age, Francesca Halsall, born in Southport and raised in the nearby home town of The Beatles, Liverpool, set out on an incredible journey as a member of Britain's Smart Track squad formed by Australian coach Bill Sweetenham. It was more than a year before London would know that it had won the right to host the 2012 Olympic Games but the journey to that destiny had already begun for the 20-year-old who returned home from Budapest as the most successful British swimmer in European Championship history in a single year.

Atop the five medals won by Halsall were two golds, one reaped on her own in the 100m freestyle, the other as the butterfly quarter of the 4x100m medley relay that was out-touched by a Russian hand but elevated when the timing system confirmed that one among the would-be champions had jumped too early from her blocks.

Back in the first two seasons on the Smart Track squad with the likes of Elizabeth Simmonds, 200m backstroke champion in Budapest, and Ellen Gandy, bronze medalist in the 200m butterfly, Halsall found herself on a world tour with Sweetenham, other coaches and tutors in tow: an altitude camp in Mexico; racing as a junior in senior waters at the US Open; then down to the swim paradise for a stretch in Australia. At the time, Sweetenham said that his mission was to leave Britain with the best coaching team in the world. When he returned to Australia in 2007, he noted that "Ben Titley has the makings of a truly great coach."

Titley is now guide to Halsall, Simmonds and two others among the medalists in Budapest, Liam Tancock and Kate Haywood, at Loughborough

University. Indeed, his charges accrued two gold, five silver and three bronze medals on Margaret Island. Halsall and Simmonds, eight medals to their names in all, shared a room in Budapest, their success prompting one team member to joke: "They've put a star on their door now and we all have to bow as we pass it."

Halsall was lost for words over her five-medal haul, describing it as "amazing... incredible". She dominated the 100m freestyle in 53.58. Silver medalist behind Britta Steffen (GER) at world titles in 2009, she was never led. In textile suits season, many have said that times are not significant. Oh, yes they are, said Halsall, who described her feelings after looking up at the scoreboard thus: "It was crazy. I thought 'wow', I didn't expect to be that quick. I was nervous going in ... I haven't had a good year on freestyle because of small injuries and so on. To do a season's

best and to win the gold is quite a fantastic feeling. As a world medallist I felt a bit of pressure out there ... but I think I channelled it well and to get that first individual title bodes really well for the rest of the season."

Later in the week, she came close to a second solo gold, falling just 0.08sec shy of causing upset in a battle with world champion Sarah Sjöstroem (SWE) in the 100m butterfly, 57.32 to 57.40. The consolation: the first British record to be set since the return to textile suits. "I wanted the gold very much but I've got to be happy," said Halsall, who took bronze in the 50m freestyle and silver in the 4x100m freestyle. "It was a personal best, a British Record and a really good swim but I still feel I could have taken the gold - maybe next time. Losing by 0.08sec - I'll feel that for the next year's training, that'll be a lot of motivation."

By Craig LORD



Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

The fastest female in Britain: Francesca Halsall

Into the lioness' den

Federica Pellegrini

Federica Pellegrini, a model of beauty, poise and performance, in and out of the water. The native of Venice (to be precise Mirano, a small town nearby) is the queen of the 200m freestyle, a class apart as Olympic champion, world title and record holder and now European champion for the first time, that result coming her way in a week in Budapest in which she won her first major prize over 800m, a bronze (later she added a gold medal on 200m but withdrew from the 400m due to illness).

On August 5th, the Italian star celebrated her 22nd birthday with family (her parents and her younger brother), fiancé, teammate and medley international Luca Marin, and a few friends. Days later she was in Budapest for the start of the most important meet of her 2010 season. She appeared utterly at ease with herself, her teammates, the public, media ... and with life.

The change in her 2010 to 2006, the last time Budapest hosted the championships, was not lost on the freestyle ace: "Four years ago I went through a very difficult period; it was my worst year; now things are different, I feel very much in control of my life."

In 2009, Federica reached maturity, both as an athlete and as a woman. Under the guidance of her late coach Alberto Castagnetti she claimed the 200m and 400m world titles in world-record times. Sadly, Alberto, a second father and an inspiration to her, passed away prematurely last October following heart surgery. Federica was devastated by his loss but, helped by her family, her fiancé, and the Italian Swimming Federation, she managed to overcome the tragedy and to convert her spiritual relationship with her former coach into a motivating force to make progress towards the achievements that are ahead of her.

That was what lay behind her decision to add the 800m to her traditional race schedule in Budapest. She raced 16 laps for the first time in international competition at the Alfred Hajos swimming complex and did so without

expectation, ready to accept any verdict from the pool. "I've won a bronze medal, I didn't expect that," she said after finishing behind Lotte Friis (DEN) and Ophelie Etienne (FRA) and 0.05sec ahead of 17-year-old Grainne Murphy (IRL). "I'm very happy also because I have improved on my best time by over 3 seconds."

As she registered the result, Federica blew a kiss with both hands to the sky: a personal tribute to Castagnetti, who wanted her to try this new event. "Mission accomplished", she whispered, a pledge honoured.

Next year, she may extend her programme the other way, taking in the 100m, though 200m and 400m will remain her priority as she looks forward to building on a reputation as No1 middle-distance freestyler in the world untainted by performance-enhancing suits now banned. How much did Federica like the current FINA ruling on suits? She says: "We are now back to real swimming and I am very pleased with it; others may be suffering, I'm not. For the time being I do not see how the world records set in the latest two years can be beaten, not certainly the one on the 200 freestyle; nevertheless, I am sure that starting from next season records will start to fall again."

She believes that swimmers must re-adapt their physiology to swimming skills and the element of their sport, with a concentration of lactic acid higher than that they were used when wearing non-textile bodysuits: adaptation will take a while but the sport will settle at its new rate and eventually move into uncharted waters once more. Precisely when in which events, no-one knows.

Federica, labelled early in her career 'the lioness of Verona', will work towards the best she can be. Last autumn, in harmony with the Italian Federation, she decided to continue to live and train in Verona, the town of Romeo and Juliet, the seat of the Italian Swimming Federation Elite Training Centre, and a city she loves and one that adores her. Coaching responsibility



Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

has fallen to Stefano Morini, a former assistant to Castagnetti's and a man familiar with Federica and her training habits under Alberto.

Beyond the pool, the swimmer likes to keep up with the latest news, is interested in fashion, music, culture, politics and many other topics. Out of training and racing season she likes to dress fashionably - Armani is one of her top sponsors - and wear high heels. She says: "I'm a woman, and like to dress like a woman". Socialising and exchanges messages with her many fans on her blog (<http://www.federicapellegrini.com/blog/>) also comes naturally. A woman of strong moral values and a big heart, she is often involved in fund-raising for charitable concerns and solidarity programmes.

Federica has clear-cut ideas about life and about what she would like to do in life, beyond what she has already achieved. Recently she said: "I want a family of my own and to raise my own children. I might quit swimming after the 2012 Olympics and marry Luca (Marin)".

By Camillo CAMETTI

FINA Press Commission Chairman



The one Lotte

The winners

400m



1. ADLINGTON
Rebecca
GBR
4:04.55



2. ETIENNE Ophelie
Cyriell
FRA
4:05.40



3. FRIIS Lotte
DEN
4:07.10

EXPECTATIONS

1. Pellegrini (ITA)
2. Balmy (FRA)
3. Adlington (GBR)

PAYOFF

- DNS
▼ 6.
▲ 1.

WR: 3:59.15 (Federica Pellegrini)
ER: 3:59.15 (Federica Pellegrini)

Double Olympic champion Rebecca Adlington (GBR) made glorious amends for her disappointment in the Budapest 800 freestyle with a well-judged win in the 400 final. Adlington, in the midst of heavy training for the Commonwealth Games, trailed a sad seventh in the 800 but came back three days later in determined style to rescue her week. Seventeen-year-old Ophelie Etienne (FRA), who had only just made the final, set a cracking pace out in lane one, followed by Lotte Friis (DEN), already a double gold medallist from the 800 and 1500. Adlington bided her time, moving past Friis on the third length and

gradually reeling Etienne in. Adlington had hit the front by the final turn and swam away to gold in 4:04.55. Etienne, silver medallist in the 800 and 4x200 freestyle relay, collected her third silver in 4:05.40 and Friis added a bronze to her collection in 4:07.10. World champion and European title-holder Federica Pellegrini (ITA) pulled out after feeling ill following her victory in the 200 freestyle the previous evening.

800m



1. FRIIS Lotte
DEN
8:23.27



2. ETIENNE Ophelie
Cyriell
FRA
8:24.00



3. PELLEGRINI
Federica
ITA
8:24.99

EXPECTATIONS

1. Friis (DEN)
2. Adlington (GBR)
3. Filippi (ITA)

PAYOFF

- 1.
▼ 7.
DNS

WR: 8:14.10 (Rebecca Adlington)
ER: 8:14.10 (Rebecca Adlington)

World champion Lotte Friis subdued the challenge of two teenage rivals to add the European 800 freestyle crown to her collection, with the action all unfolding in front of Olympic gold medallist Rebecca Adlington, who came to Budapest in the midst of heavy training and was consequently completely out of the picture in the pool where she had made her big international breakthrough with silver in 2006. Friis led through the first 200m but was then caught by 19-year-old Ophelie Etienne, the French former world junior 200 freestyle champion swimming in the outside lane one, with

17-year-old Grainne Murphy (IRL), the fastest final qualifier, in hot pursuit. But Friis, Olympic bronze medallist in 2008, had taken charge again by the 500m mark and resisted further attacks to clinch gold in 8:23.27. Etienne seized the silver in 8:24.00 and Italy's Federica Pellegrini, stepping up a distance, surged through on the last length to take the bronze in 8:24.99, pipping Murphy by just 0.05 seconds.

1500m



1. FRIIS Lotte
DEN
15:59.13



2. MURPHY Grainne
IRL
16:02.29



3. VILLACELJA
GARCIA Erika
ESP
16:05.08

EXPECTATIONS

1. Filippi (ITA)
2. Friis (DEN)
3. Villacelja (ESP)

PAYOFF

- DNS
▲ 1.
● 3.

WR: 15:42.54 (Kate Ziegler)
ER: 15:44.93 (Alessia Filippi)

Lotte Friis (DEN) achieved a bold distance double, leading all the way to add the 1500 title to the 800 freestyle crown she had retained two days earlier. Friis, 800m world champion and silver medallist over 1,500m in Rome last year, was followed by world bronze medallist Camelia Potec (ROM) down the first length but then 17-year-old Grainne Murphy (IRE) took over the challenge to the Dane and was the one who chased her hardest for the rest of the 30-length race. Erika Villacelja (ESP), the 2004 European 800 gold medallist, had overhauled Potec by the 500m mark and the race turned into a three-way battle as

Friis, Murphy and Villacelja stretched away from the pack. Murphy, the fastest final qualifier and a former triple European junior champion, battled to get on terms with the relentless Friis but could not reduce the gap, which hovered around two seconds for most of the race. Friis duly secured her second gold of the meet in 15:59.13, with Murphy, denied bronze by just 0.05 seconds in the 800, stepping up to silver in 16:02.29 and Villacelja, silver medallist in 2008, taking bronze in 16:05.08. Potec was a distant fourth. Murphy said: "I'm surprised I managed the change from junior to senior level so well."

"After an awful performance in the 800, this race was very important to me. I was mentally strong enough to come back. That meant so much to me, it's better to come back here smiling than crying, like I did after the disappointment of the 800. Everyone's expecting so much of me. I don't want to let people down but I let myself down when I think about everyone else being let down."
– Adlington

"Today I was as fast as when I won Olympic bronze in Beijing – and that after the return to textile swimsuits."
– Friis

"I still have a few problems with the pace, which is completely different from that in the 200m"
– Pellegrini

A whole Lotte trouble gain' on: Friis (DEN) prepares for a 30-lap victory

"I was still tired from the 800. I think it's stupid to schedule these long-distance events without a one-day break. Today I knew I would be able to win the 1500 but thought it would be closer."
– Friis



Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY



Rebecca Adlington

Expect the best to bounce back

Midweek in Budapest, Rebecca Adlington (GBR) felt like a boxer on the ropes: an Olympic champion and world-record holder knocked sideways in 2009 by a fourth place in the world-title race over 800m freestyle when she finished fourth in Rome behind three women in 100% polyurethane suits that she refused to wear, she finished seventh in the 800m on Margaret Island after a week of 55km of training when all around her had rested for their big meet of the summer. The tears that followed reflected the pressure she feels to deliver the ever-present promise of her status as double Olympic champion.

"It is extremely difficult to get in the pool and race people who are fully rested," said Adlington, who was comforted by Nottingham coach Bill Furniss after the race. "Everyone back home still expects you to win a gold medal. It's difficult when everyone has that expectation of you."

Three days later and a little more rested, Adlington, Olympic 400m champion too, was back where she works so hard to be: atop the podium, gold around her neck a smile on her face once more. Her first European 400m title was "good to have" but what mattered most she said was the thing that so many said is insignificant this year in the wake of a return to textile-only suits: time. "The gold is good to have but the time is what gives me the confidence to know we're doing the right things," said Adlington. "When you train so hard, you can only tell where you are in relation to your own performance. So yes, racing and winning is really important, but the time is too."

As swimming has always been: a marriage of time and place, both equally important. In the 400m in Budapest we saw 4:04.45, a championship record, on the board but the way the time unfolded was just as significant as the end result. It was not until 250m that Adlington noticed Ophelie-Cyrielle Etienne (FRA) cracking out a phenomenal pace over in lane 1. "I thought 'o my God!'" said Adlington a body length

back. Over the next 100m, the Olympic champion showed her quality with a spurt of speed that left 800m world and European champion Lotte Friis (DEN) treading water. "I just kept saying to myself 'come on, come on, dig in, dig in. Put your head down.' By the end it felt really great," said Adlington, who caught her French rival at the last turn and settled the argument decisively down the last 50m. "In Rome last year it was pain from beginning to end. But not today. It felt controlled."

Her bounce back from disappointment in the 800m prompted Britain head coach Dennis Pursley to note: "It is one of the things that you look for in a great athlete and indeed a great team. The ability to bounce back from disappointment because they all have those no matter if its Michael Phelps or Becky Adlington. It splits the greats from the rest, athletes and teams."

Adlington acknowledged the absence of Pellegrini, the Italian who she beat into fourth for the Olympic crown but who won the world title last summer. In Budapest, Pellegrini felt too ill to race after a fever had not subsided come the morning of the 400m heats. "It was a great shame that she couldn't be there but it was the right decision for her. If you're poorly you shouldn't risk it. But the field was very strong without her," said Adlington.

The key to a much better 400m than 800m was the distance - "if you're unrested it might make 1sec per 100m difference but on an 800m, that looks a lot more" - and attitude. "I was so disappointed after the 800m. I let it get to me too much but I decided to relax and just enjoy it, no pressure," said Adlington, who worked through the summer, taking only a few days rest as she prepares to race Australians and others at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

That mission dictated a swift return to work the morning after Budapest: she awoke for her exodus from Hungary at 3:45m. By mid-morning, Adlington was answering the call of sponsors and by Tuesday she was

heading back to training - via the mission she has in mind for a time of retirement. "I want every child in Britain to learn to swim, for life, for fun and for the sheer thrill of feeling what it's like to move through water. That's my mission in the longer term. I'd like it to be my legacy, a common goal the whole nation can share."

The work has already well under way. A day back in Britain after Budapest, Adlington launched the British Gas 3 Free Swims campaign, at a pool in Hackney, London. British Gas, which invests £15 million in British Swimming and is also a personal sponsor for Adlington, runs a scheme that allows up to two adults and two children have three free swims at health clubs, hotels and leisure centres around the country.

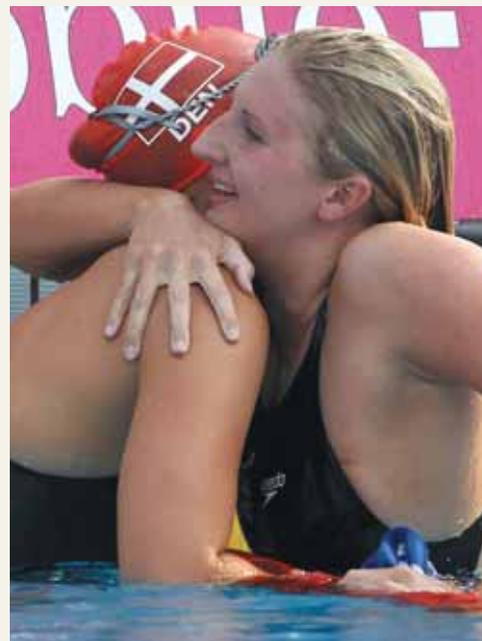
Adlington said: "I am on a personal mission to get as many people as possible into the pool to enjoy the benefits of swimming. The British Gas 3 Free Swims campaign is the perfect opportunity to get customers, from paddling pool to podium, into the water to have fun in a safe and healthy environment." Swimming saves lives, she noted as a role model in a country that witnesses more than 400 drownings every year, such accidents the third most common cause of accidental death among children.

"I was at a schools for pools event recently," said Adlington. "There were 10,000 kids involved in the scheme and just seeing the kids' faces light up was such an amazing feeling. Some of them came up and said 'I saw you on TV and I want to be like you' ... that means so much to me. To be able to inspire children, well, there's nothing better. I don't want to do this work because I expect them to go on and be an Olympic champion, though some may do just that, I want them to just enjoy it and me safe. I remember as a child what it felt like to move through water. It's one of the greatest thrills. No-one should be left out."

By Craig LORD

Change the schedule, please!

Lotte Friis



Sweet sorority: Rebecca Adlington (R) and Lotte Friis know what the other has had to go through to get gold on distance freestyle

800m will remain my main event as it is the Olympic distance.

Is it a given thing to become such a good distance swimmer? When did you or your coach recognise your special abilities?

I don't know the specific timing of things but what I can recall is that we just agreed that this was what I would do in the future.

Have you been analysed by scientists back home as to whether you have any specific ability? Are your lungs larger than the average for instance?

Yes, I've been analysed by some Danish scientists. No specific results with the lungs, the special thing is that my blood can carry an extremely high level of oxygen. Much more than the average. This is a base from which we can build my trainings on.

Have you ever thought to race in open water?

We discussed it and decided to try it before the Olympics in 2012. Actually, we wanted to do it here but later I agreed with my coach that pool competition is the No. 1 and that I would not take any risks.

Would you be able to get used to the kicks and punches at the turns?

That's the point. I'm not sure I would be able to accept that.

Talking of the London Games: do you put any pressure on yourself by targeting the gold medal or will you just go for a medal and hope for the best?

Of course, if you are an athlete you should think of the gold medal. However, there are a couple of girls who will have a real chance of winning the race and in swimming you can't control what the others do. So I prepare to come up with my best performance and will hope that that may be enough for a medal, or, let's hope, for the gold medal!

By Gergely CSURKA

You should be completely satisfied: doubling in the 800m and 1500m - that's quite a feat!

Of course, I am satisfied: these championships produced very nice results for me. I couldn't expect any more. The 400m would have been an extra but this event is too short for me, I simply can't match the fast-starting pace of the others. But all in all, the two gold medals are more than fine.

After winning the 1,500m you labelled the schedule as 'stupid' in the flash quotes.

Yes, I think we should have a different programme. This current one definitely affects the quality of swimming. There must be at least one day rest between the 800m final and the heats of the 1500m. Of course, it is the same for

everybody so we cannot do anything but try to give our best effort and see whether it is enough or not.

When you saw the schedule what was your first reaction?

Well, it was the same in Eindhoven. We had thought there was a possibility that the 1,500m would be moved to the first days but it turned out that everything remained the same. So what we could do was to prepare for this tough challenge. However, we should fight on to have a change: in Budapest, no-one could give 100 percent during the second race (the 1,500m).

So the 800m was the perfect one?

I was as fast as when I won Olympic bronze in Beijing - and that after the return to textile swim suits! And the

Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH



British empire

The winners

50m

-  1. HERASIMENIA Aliaksandra BLR 27.64 **CR**
-  2. SAMULSKI Daniela GER 27.99
-  3. PERIS MINGUET Mercedes ESP 28.01

- EXPECTATIONS**
1. Samulski (GER)
 2. Zueva (RUS)
 3. Schreuder (NED)
- PAYOFF**
- ▼ 2. DNS
 - ▼ 4.

WR: 27.06 (Zhao Jing)
ER: 27.23 (Daniela Samulski)

Aliaksandra Herasimenia (BLR), silver medalist in the 100 freestyle, climbed to the top step of the podium to receive a gold in the 50 backstroke that had looked destined to go her way after she set the pace through the heats and semi-finals. European silver medalist in 2006 and world silver medalist 2007, Herasimenia lowered her own championship record to 27.64 to consign European record-holder Daniela Samulski, the 2009 world silver medalist, to one more silver (27.99), though the German was delighted to swim under 28 seconds for her best time in a textile suit. Mercedes Peris (ESP) – a

number of European fourths and fifths to her name over the years, including fourth in the Budapest 100 backstroke – at last celebrated her medal moment with bronze (28.01).

Rain and reid:
Aliaksandra Herasimenia was banned for doping but five years after her return she won her first major title

100m

-  1. SPOFFORTH Gemma GBR 59.80
-  2. SIMMONDS Elizabeth GBR 1:00.19
-  3. MENSING Jenny GER 1:00.72

- EXPECTATIONS**
1. Spofforth (GBR)
 2. Zueva (RUS)
 3. Simmonds (GBR)
- PAYOFF**
- 1. DNS
 - ▲ 2.

WR: 58.12 (Gemma Spofforth)
ER: 58.12 (Gemma Spofforth)

World champion Gemma Spofforth turned the tables on Elizabeth Simmonds as the British pair bagged backstroke gold and silver for the second time in three days. Simmonds, the first Briton to win the European women's 200 backstroke crown, could not match her teammate's strong finish in the 100 as Spofforth followed 200 silver with 100 gold. Germany's Daniela Samulski led Simmonds and Spofforth at the halfway mark but could not contain them on the second length. Spofforth powered through to prevail in 59.80 – way outside her fast-suit world record of 58.12 – and become the first British winner of

the event since Olympic champion Judy Grinham in 1958. Simmonds booked silver in 1:00.19, with Jenny Mensing (GER), fourth in the 200, coming through for the bronze in 1:00.72 at her first major long-course championships. Russian world silver medalist Anastasia Zueva, suffering from back strain, did not contest the race.

200m

-  1. SIMMONDS Elizabeth GBR 2:07.04
-  2. SPOFFORTH Gemma GBR 2:08.25
-  3. DA ROCHA MARCE Duane ESP 2:10.46

- EXPECTATIONS**
1. Zueva (RUS)
 2. Spofforth (GBR)
 3. Simmonds (GBR)
- PAYOFF**
- ▲ 1.

WR: 2:04.81 (Kirsty Coventry)
ER: 2:04.94 (Anastasia Zueva)

Elizabeth Simmonds and Gemma Spofforth scored an emphatic one-two triumph for Britain in the 200m backstroke, with Simmonds leading from start to finish to win by more than a second from her team-mate. Simmonds set a fierce pace and was half a second clear by the end of the first length, stretching her advantage over Germany's chasing Jenny Mensing to nearly two seconds at the halfway mark. Spofforth, the reigning world 100 backstroke champion, struck back in the second half of the race as she gained on Simmonds. Sixth at the 50-metre mark and fourth at 100m, she moved up to second as the

rest of the field fell away. Simmonds, sixth at the 2008 Olympics and fifth at the 2009 Worlds, won in 2:07.04, with Spofforth taking silver in 2:08.25 and Spain's Duane Da Rocha bronze in 2:10.46. World championship silver medalist Anastasia Zueva, in Budapest but suffering from a back strain, missed the 200 in which she holds the European record, fast-suited, at 2:04.94. She would have been pushed to beat Simmonds, however. "That's my first major medal and I'm thrilled," Simmonds said. "On that last length I was just waiting for Gemma to attack and gave it everything to keep her off.



Herasimenia was suspended for two years in 2003 for failing an out-of-competition dope test. "This is a great day for me. I won the gold medal and can't yet believe it," she said. "You can only swim your own race in the 50 and not look over to the others."

Home backstroker hero Nikolett Szepesi watched the competition from the stands. After winning a medal in Eindhoven in 2008, she fell shy of expectation at the Beijing Olympics – in fact, she broke her hand in spring that year at home while wrestling for the ownership of the TV's remote controller with her younger brother. She was fed up with swimming and decided to quit the sport, though she stayed in the pool and worked with little kids in the swimming kindergarden. After a while, her hunger returned... And so did she. Szepesi broke all national records in the S/C nationals in November 2009 and raced in good shape in Istanbul. However, in January FINA sent a message that Szepesi had not reported her return to the race pool, and she should have had a nine-month long non-competing period under FINA rules that apply to all who quit the sport and are not available for out-of-competition doping tests. Szepesi is serving a nine-month ban and as such the beautiful competitor (also appeared in the Hungarian edition of Playboy) watch from the stands this time.

We have a great rivalry and I've watched Gemma achieve so much. But it was my turn tonight. My goals? To get faster and faster." Spofforth said: "It's great for Britain to have those first two steps on the podium and I'm so happy for Lizzie. She works so hard and is very talented – she deserves it."



Elizabeth Simmonds & Gemma Spofforth

“It’s what Britain needs”

Qohelet puts it quite well in Ecclesiastes 1:9 - “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun”. Compared to the epic scale of all things Biblical, 52 years is a drop in the ocean. But when Elizabeth Simmonds and Gemma Spofforth won the first women’s backstroke 1-2 for Britain since 1958 and then backed-up three days later by matching the result over 100m, this time with Spofforth at the helm, those waving their Union Flags must surely have felt like the man who sips a chilled beer after dashing across Africa barefoot.

Back when Budapest hosted the 1958 championships on Margaret Island in what in 2006 and 2010 served as the warm-up pool, Judy Grinham, Olympic champion two years earlier, and Margaret Edwards had just the 100m to aim for, the 200m introduced to the programme in 1970. Thirty years on and 14 years beyond the moment that Britain took a decision to “turn professional” by hiring a full-time performance director and eventually place full-time coaches at the helm of intensive training centres, Simmonds and Spofforth heralded in a new era.

Simmonds, a 19-year-old now coached by Ben Titley but tipped for success when chosen for Britain’s Smart Track squad at 13 years of age, roared to gold from go to a dominant 2:07.04, which granted her a debut international crown and, at that moment, the fastest 5 times in the world in 2010). Spofforth, world 100m champion last year, was the only woman in the same race, silver her property in 2:08.25.

The courage shown out front by Simmonds was typical of a girl who at 13 when I asked her what her interests were she replied: “Cliff jumping”. Sorry? “Yes, I like to go to the edge of cliffs and jump off them”. That same years she started to make regular weekly visits to Loughborough with then coach Graham Bassi and leave rude messages on performance director Bill Sweetenham’s white board, including sketches reflecting

the girth of her coaches and the director. Sweetenham’s response. “She’s got great attitude. It’s what Britain needs.”

Plenty of that was on show in Budapest, and not only from Simmonds and others Made in England. After the 200m the champion immediately placed her debut senior international crown: “It’s absolutely fantastic. I know it’s not Olympics or worlds, it’s Europeans but it confirms that everything is going well and I’m just really excited about the future. This is a stepping stone and today tells me I know I can cope with the pressure. That’s my first major medal and I’m thrilled. On that last length I was just waiting for Gemma to attack and gave it everything to keep her off. We have a great rivalry and I’ve watched Gemma achieve so much but it was my turn tonight. If I can swim 2:07 now, I’ll certainly improve my lifetime best of 2:06.79 at Commonwealth Games in Delhi in October. My goals? to get faster and faster!”

Spofforth, well into a second career beyond illness, realignment, relocation to Florida, the death of her mother, a near miss at the Olympics and a joyous breakthrough to the world crown in 2009, is the kind of team player squads pray for. Support and steely determination rolled into one. “It’s incredibly special get a Brit 1-2,” said Spofforth, followed by: “It sucks a little bit to get beaten by Lizzie,” ... I didn’t get my pace right and maybe I should have taken it out a little bit faster. I’m still learning to swim the 200m.”

The 100m final proved her greater level of control over two lengths: she won in 59.80 over 1:00.19 for Simmonds, after having turned third, kept her cool, raced her own race, including a golden return lap. “This was another great day for the British team (now on 4 gold, 4 silver and 4 bronze) after our double in the 200m,” said the champion. “It shows that we’re in great shape for the Commonwealth Games, our main aim this year.”

Coached by Martyn Wilby and Greg Troy in Florida, Spofforth was delighted to rubber-stamped her world crown with a debut European title. “It’s great to get

a back-to-back but I had a lot of doubts going into it. I’m not fully rested and I wasn’t sure I had it in me. I didn’t go in quite as confident as I could have been.”

Spofforth may well have a deeper understanding of what it means to be confident, to be optimistic. In the day, she swims. At night, the world champion saves lives as a volunteer counsellor at the Alachua County Crisis Centre in Florida, partly as an act of thanks to those in the Sunshine State who helped her to find salvation in her own journey of soaring highs and crushing lows. The 22-year-old joined an elite band of triple champions earlier this year at her swansong United States NCAA collegiate championships, where she won the 100 yards backstroke for a third

successive year for the Florida Gators.

So good is she at extending to others the strength and courage she has displayed in the pool and life since the death of her mother Lesley in late 2007 that after only four months of counselling work, Spofforth was been asked to be an associate of the unit, available for mercy dashes through the night should a caller contemplating suicide need a more personal touch than the phone can provide.

It was in 2005 after she had recovered from debilitating pancreatitis that Spofforth got what her father Mark described in a note of thanks to those caring for his daughter in the States as “a golden chance to train at the University

of Florida on a sporting scholarship, even if the coach thinks this is the riskiest scholarship he’s ever awarded”.

Asked how she found a balance between the worlds of swimming and life-saving, with each requiring robust mental stamina, Spofforth said: “They’re complementary and contradicting. What happens in the room is so confidential that everything gets left in there. I can get depressed after a call, but I leave it in the room when I come out. A lot of times I come out thinking how lucky I am and I think that I’m lucky to have got to help that person.”

By Craig LORD

Hand-in-hand: teammates Gemma Spofforth (L) and Elizabeth Simmonds celebrate a second 1-2 finish for Britain on backstroke



Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH



WOMEN BREASTSTROKE



On a different level

Brace pace:
Rikke Moeller Pedersen won two breaststroke medals for Denmark

The winners

50m

-  **1. EFIMOVA Yuliya**
RUS
30.29 **CR**
-  **2. HAYWOOD Kate**
GBR
31.12
-  **3. JOHANSSON Jennie**
SWE
31.24

EXPECTATIONS
1. Efimova (RUS)
2. Nijhuis (NED)
3. Artmyeva (RUS)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 4.
▼ 7.

WR: 29.80 (Jessicah Hardy)
ER: 30.09 (Yulia Efimova)

World champion Yuliya Efimova (RUS) became a double European gold medalist with a runaway win in the breaststroke sprint, having already gathered in the 100 breaststroke title in similarly dominant style. European silver medalist in 2008, Efimova, in her distinctive pink cap, swooped away from the field, stroking fast and clean, and won by nearly a second, a vast margin in such a short race. Efimova shaved 0.03 seconds from her own championship record to win in 30.29, with Kate Haywood (GBR) taking silver in a personal best 31.12 and Jennie Johansson (SWE) bronze in 31.24. "I had great

back problems during the entire season and that's why I didn't compete in the 200 breast here," Efimova said. "I can manage the problems in the sprints. When I get back home I'll have a medical check at the hospital." Haywood said: "I'm satisfied with my second place. Top position is simply impossible – Efimova swims on a different level."



Evergreen Ukrainian Svitlana Bondarenko, still going strong in the week of her 39th birthday, squeezed through to the semi-finals of the event she won in 2004 but could get no further this time.

"I had hip surgery last year and went through months of rehabilitation and steady hard work. To come here and do a lifetime best that dates back to I don't know when [2005 in fact] is just amazing" – Haywood

100m

-  **1. EFIMOVA Yuliya**
RUS
1:06.32 **CR**
-  **2. PEDERSEN Rikke Moeller**
DEN
1:07.36
-  **2. JOHANSSON Jennie**
SWE
1:07.36

EXPECTATIONS
1. Efimova (RUS)
2. Pedersen (DEN)
3. Scarcella (ITA)

PAYOFF
● 1.
● 2.
DNS

WR: 1:04.45 (Jessicah Hardy)
ER: 1:05.41 (Yulia Efimova)

World silver medalist Yuliya Efimova left her rivals in her wake and proved herself Europe's finest with a comprehensive victory in the 100 breaststroke. The 18-year-old Russian from Grozny, Chechnya, stamped her authority on the race from the start and won by more than a second, lowering her own championship record 1:06.32. Denmark's Rikke Moeller Pedersen and Sweden's Jennie Johansson gave a display of Scandinavian solidarity, sharing silver medals in joint second place in 1:07.36 ahead of another Swede, 2008 bronze medalist Joline Hoestman. Efimova, fourth at the 2008 Olympics, was not

overjoyed with her time, which was just under a second outside the 1:05.41 European record she set at last year's Rome World Championships. "I prepared well for these European Championships and wanted to swim faster than I did today," she said. "However, for me these championships are just another step on the road to the Olympic Games in London."



Photo: REUTERS

No, not the synchro pair: but this Anastasia (Chaun) got her timing right too

200m

-  **1. CHAUN Anastasia**
RUS
2:23.50 **CR**
-  **2. NORDENSTAM Sara**
NOR
2:24.42
-  **3. PEDERSEN Rikke Moeller**
DEN
2:24.99

EXPECTATIONS
1. Higl (SRB)
2. Hostman (SWE)
3. Pedersen (DEN)

PAYOFF
▼ 8.
▼ 4.
● 3.

WR: 2:20.12 (Annamay Pierse)
ER: 2:21.62 (Nadja Higl)

Anastasia Chaun maintained Russia's winning ways in women's breaststroke, securing her first major championship victory and adding the 200 crown to the gold won by Yuliya Efimova in the 100 event. Chaun, a 21-year-old sports student from Moscow and coached by her father, inherited Efimova's European title and also broke her teammate's championship record by more than half a second in 2:23.50. Efimova did not contest the event this time. Joline Hoestman (SWE) was fastest down the first length but Rikke Moeller Pedersen (DEN), the 100 silver medalist, took them through the 100 and 150 marks

before Chaun, 0.85 seconds adrift in second place at the turn, made her unanswerable charge down the last length to win by almost a second. Norway's Olympic bronze medalist Sara Nordenstam, who swam for Sweden until 2002, came through for silver in 2:24.42 as Pedersen was pegged back to bronze in 2:24.99. As in the 100, Hoestman was left a frustrated fourth. World champion Nadja Higl (SRB) was never in the hunt, finishing eighth and last in 2:29.60, compared to her 2:21.62 world-title win.

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On the winning side



Yulia Efimova Health comes first

At the age of 15 she won three gold medals at the European Short-Course Championships in Debrecen. A couple of months later Efimova took part in her second European Championships – in Eindhoven and claimed gold in the 200m breaststroke and silver over 50m. She was ready too for a bigger result over 100m but failed to make the semis: two other Russian swimmers were faster in the preliminaries.

"I was crying next two hours," she recalled, "but finally realised that I had nobody to blame but myself. I swam this distance in the wrong way. Tactically wrong."

Last year, Efimova became world champion in Rome. Some time later she told me: "I got injured before that competition. That was the main reason why I was very nervous. We usually have a morning practice in the day of the final, but my coach Irina Vyatchanina decided not to go to the pool at all. She told me that my injured leg needs more rest. During the warm-up I was in a terrible mood. It seemed to me that all my body hurt. But when I rose to the starting block I realised that I was not nervous at all. It was the same as in Budapest. The difference is that this year I'm suffer from a shoulder injury."

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Do you control what's going on around while swimming?

It depends. Usually I prefer to look ahead. It's not right to pay attention to those who swim alongside you. I can explain: if I see that a rival is swimming faster than me, I start to activate my own movements and all technique changes immediately. It was exactly this way in Rome: when I touched the wall I missed my name on the scoreboard. So I had no idea what place I got. A terrible feeling...

Maybe you should start to count the strokes under the water in order to forget about the rivals?

I do that when I swim 200m. The 50m is different. Everything is so fast there... And there are plenty of other things that I have to control.

You said once in a TV interview that you will never cry on the podium because you cried a lot in your previous life. What was that about?

At the Beijing Olympics, for instance. I left my goggles in the water right after the starting signal. I was crying so much at the 2008 nationals... I beat the world record twice and had no emotions at all after the first record. But when the second one happened I realised that I was so happy that I wouldn't be able to cope with the emotions of it. And then the tears came. It never happened before – I couldn't stop crying for a long time.

After winning the 100m in Budapest you didn't look satisfied.

I expected a faster time. Even in semi-final. Not 1:06 but 1:05.

Maybe that is because of injury?

I can't say that the injury disturbs me a lot. When the competition starts, I never pay attention to such things. But in general our training plan for this season was broken, that's true.

It looks like you have no rivals in Europe over 100m.

You never feel so in the pool. I have to control the situation every second.

Don't you feel sorry that you refused to swim on 200m in Budapest?

Just a little. My sport life is not over yet, there will be plenty of competition so I must be healthy first of all. My parents and my coach think the same.

By Elena VAITSEKHOVSKAIA

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WOMEN BUTTERFLY



Swedish High- Flyers

The winners

50m

-  **1. ALSHAMMAR**
Therese
SWE
25.63
-  **2. OTTESEN Jeanette**
DEN
25.69
-  **3. HENIQUE Melanie**
FRA
26.09

EXPECTATIONS
1. Alshammar (SWE)
2. Snildal (NOR)
3. Sjoestrom (SWE)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 7.
▼ 4.

WR: 25.07 (Therese Alshammar)
ER: 25.07 (Therese Alshammar)

Former world champion Therese Alshammar, top of the world or thereabouts for more than a decade, continued to defy the years with a runaway victory in the one-length sprint. Alshammar, a double Olympic silver medallist back in 2000, was turning 33 shortly after these championships, but none of her younger rivals could match her pace. Having established a championship record of 25.50 in the semi-finals, she was given a tough test in the final by Jeanette Ottesen (DEN), prevailing in the end by just 0.06 seconds in 25.63, well outside the world record 25.07 she set last year. Ottesen took silver in 25.69 and Melanie

Henique of France grabbed bronze in 26.09, just 0.05 seconds ahead of Sarah Sjoestrom (SWE) who had set the fastest time in the 100m freestyle semi-finals not long before. "I had a very bad start but I swam well. I have a lot of experience but anything can happen," Alshammar said.

Madam Butterfly:
Sarah Sjoestrom (SWE)

"I never reckoned with such an improvement – so close to Therese Alshammar. I have never been so fast. The silver medal is simply great." – Ottesen

100m

-  **1. SJOESTROM**
Sarah
SWE
57.32
-  **2. HALSALL**
Francesca
GBR
57.40
-  **3. ALSHAMMAR**
Therese
SWE
57.80

EXPECTATIONS
1. Sjoestrom (SWE)
2. Mongel (FRA)
3. Snildal (NOR)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 6.
▼ 13.

WR: 56.06 (Sarah Sjoestrom)
ER: 56.06 (Sarah Sjoestrom)

Youth had its day as world champion Sarah Sjoestrom, four days short of her 17th birthday, retained her European 100 butterfly crown, with one of her biggest challenges coming from a rival nearly twice her age. Fellow Swede Therese Alshammar, turning 33 in August yet swimming the 100 fly for the first time at a major championships, sprinted clear down the first length but could not prevent Sjoestrom and Francesca Halsall (GBR) from swooping past in the closing stages. Sjoestrom, third at the turn and half a second adrift, produced the power to win by a tiny fraction from Halsall in

57.32 and banish the frustration of two fourth places - in the 50 butterfly, won by Alshammar, and 100 freestyle, won by Halsall. Halsall grabbed the silver in 57.40 and Alshammar, tiring but never in serious danger of losing a medal, bronze in 57.80. "My whole season before the championships was really bad, so I'm all the more surprised about my results here in Budapest," Sjoestrom said.

"Oh what a close race," Halsall said. "I wanted the gold very much but I've got to be happy. It was a personal best, a British record ... Losing by 0.08sec – I'll feel that for the next year's training, that'll be a lot of motivation."

200m

-  **1. HOSSZU Katinka**
HUN
2:06.71
-  **2. JAKABOS**
Zsuzsanna
HUN
2:07.06
-  **3. GANDY**
Ellen
GBR
2:07.54

EXPECTATIONS
1. Hosszu (HUN)
2. Mongel (FRA)
3. Gandy (GBR)

PAYOFF
● 1.
▼ 5.
● 3.

WR: 2:01.81 (Liu Zige)
ER: 2:04.27 (Katinka Hosszu)

Katinka Hosszu led a second one-two triumph for Hungary at these championships, producing her trademark ram-paging finish to win the 200 butterfly and claim her third Budapest gold medal. The home crowd yelled in anticipation as Hosszu, fourth at the final turn, charged through and surged on to win from teammate Zsuzsanna Jakabos in 2:06.71 to 2:07.06. Jakabos had set the pace for most of the race, having taken the lead from defending champion Aurore Mongel (FRA) on the second length, but could not keep world bronze medallist Hosszu at bay. Bronze went to the only woman who kept the

Hungarians company by the end, Britain's Ellen Gandy, on 2:07.54. Hosszu, second to Britain's Hannah Miley over 400m medley, had led the first Hungarian one-two ahead of Evelyn Verraszto in the 200 medley and also celebrated gold in Hungary's 4x200 freestyle relay. "At the 150 metre turn I put everything I had into it. I believed I could catch up with Zsuzsanna ... I'm very happy for the Hungarians that we finished one and two," Hosszu said.

Early morning after the race, Gandy returned to her Australian training base, her final words directed at the fabulous support of the Hungarian crowd for its home heroes: "It's a fantastic feeling to swim not only against two Hungarian contenders but against 6,000 Hungarians. But I like the noise and it cheered me on. That's what it'll be like for us in London 2012."



Photo: REUTERS



Therese Alshammar

Evergreen – and a champion still

The years have done nothing to diminish the pool diva's appetite for amassing medals. Therese Alshammar has spent more than a decade compiling her hoard and she raised her tally by five at the European Championships, the competition in which she won her first medal at 19 – a bronze in the 50 freestyle – back in 1997. Gold in the 50 butterfly and 50 freestyle, silver in the 4x100 medley relay and bronze in the 100 butterfly and 4x100 freestyle relay hoisted her total of Olympic, World and European Championship medals to a record 67, taking her one beyond versatile contemporary Martina Moravcova (SVK). Alshammar, who was due to celebrate her 33rd birthday on August 26, broke her first world records at the European Short-Course Championships in Lisbon in 1999. She first shone on the world stage at the 2000 Sydney Olympics with silver medals in the 50 and 100 metres freestyle.

Alshammar is a consummate sprinter, with four European titles in the 50 freestyle, one in the 100 freestyle and a world and two European golds in the 50 butterfly in which she holds the world record at 25.07. But she is far from averse from trying something new and took on world champion Sarah Sjoestroem, a fellow Swede half her age, in the 100 butterfly in Budapest. Alshammar, untouchable on the first length, was run down by Sjoestroem and newly crowned 100 freestyle champion Francesca Halsall (GBR) on the second but clung on for bronze. "I swam the 100 fly for the first time at a major championships," she said. "You always have to test something new. In so far as that is concerned, I was a newcomer within this experienced field."

Smooth in style and an immaculate sprinter, long years in the sport have not made her immune from mishap. "I had a very bad start but I swam well," she said after winning the 50 butterfly. "I have a lot of experience but anything can happen."

Sjoestroem has a high regard for Alshammar and describes herself as a

fan. "She's very good. I like her very much," Sjoestroem said. "I can watch her technique and learn from her. I want to be as fast as she is the first 50, and after too."

These were great championships for older swimmers in a sport in which careers at the top rarely used to go beyond the early 20s. Lars Froelander, Alshammar's fellow Swede and fellow "flyer, relished his outings in Budapest, picking up a bronze in the 4x100 freestyle relay. A European 100 butterfly finalist back in 1995 and champion three times in a row from 1997, he almost made the medals in that event in Budapest, finishing fourth in the final, a tantalising 0.08 seconds away from bronze. Now 36, Froelander was Olympic 100 butterfly champion in 2000 and world champion in 2001. "When I look at the starting-list I feel really old with these young swimmers around," he said. "However, as long as I'm good enough for a medal, I'll go on. It's still real fun."

Evergreen of them all, Svitlana Bondarenko (UKR), European champion in 2004, was still going strong in the week of her 39th birthday and reached the semi-finals of the 100 breaststroke, in which she scooped her first silver medal as a 19-year-old, half a lifetime ago, in 1991.

Gap Year:
Sarah Sjoestroem (R)
and Swedish compatriot
Therese Alshammar both won
butterfly titles, one at 17,
the other 32

Meanwhile, Alshammar, who spends half the year Down Under and half back in Europe following the sun, sails serenely on. "It's going so well for me, so why should I retire?" she said after winning the 50 freestyle, an event she had previously won in 2000, 2002 and 2004, while taking part in the last eight finals, each one delivering a medal. Onwards and upwards, she says. "The 2012 Olympics are a great goal."

By Derek PARR

More strings to Sjoestroem's bow

Sarah Sjoestroem

The possibilities seem endless for Sarah Sjoestroem, a world champion and world record breaker at 15. A year on, she has added the European 100 butterfly crown to her collection and claimed a silver in Sweden's medley relay and bronze in the 4x100 freestyle relay. "It's been very good," Sjoestroem said. "It's been one of my best championships. I did my best times in the 100 free and 50 fly, and the 100 fly was okay." She was particularly pleased with those 100

freestyle and 50 butterfly times, even though they both left her outside the podium in fourth place, because they were achieved in a textile suit following the ban on non-textile fast-suits.

Sjoestroem, who was turning 17 two days after the championships, was unable to approach her fast-suited 100 butterfly world record of 56.06, winning in Budapest in 57.32 ahead of Francesca Halsall (GBR) and fellow-Swede Therese Alshammar. "The 100 fly is still

one and a half seconds behind my world record. But I feel better in my swimming, with my technique. I look forward," she said. "I'm very happy with the change because before, with the (non-textile) suits, I was so high on the water. It wasn't so good. But now it's very good."

Swimming against the vastly experienced Alshammar, a double champion in Budapest, was a novelty for Sjoestroem. "I knew she was going to go out very fast and I was thinking and relaxing and, you know, (having) fun," she said.

"It was close and I knew (Halsall) was very fast in the beginning too, so I was just swimming my race."

Now she is weighing up her options for next year's World Championships and the 2012 Olympics, and they are plentiful. "It's looking very good right now because I have a lot of events to choose between, like even 100 backstroke," Sjoestroem said. "I didn't swim 100 backstroke here because it was very close to the 100 fly. And 200 free could be a very good thing in the future too, so I have 100 back, 100 free, 200 free, 100 fly, maybe 200 fly in the future, I don't know, maybe not in London (2012), but I will see." It will depend partly on the timetable. "It depends what's feeling best. If the butterfly doesn't feel very good I can swim freestyle. But I hope I can swim as much as possible in the Olympics. I will see how the schedule (is)," she said.

Sjoestroem swam a rapid 1:00.74 in the 100 backstroke at the 2009 World Championships in Rome last July and went 1:57.34 in the 200 freestyle in Linköping, Sweden, earlier that month, so the potential is definitely there.

But first up will be the short-course season later this year. "I think I'll swim World Cup in Stockholm, of course, and the World Cup in Tokyo, (but) no more World Cups, (and) maybe the World Championships in Dubai. It's a long way away in December. I don't know what events I'll swim in short-course yet." Great to be so full of options, with a vista of more grand exploits to enjoy.

By Derek PARR



Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY



WOMEN INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY



Cheers, leaders

Photo: REUTERS

The winners

200m

-  **1. HOSSZU Katinka**
HUN
2:10.09 **CR**
-  **2. VERRASZTO Evelyn**
HUN
2:10.10
-  **3. MILEY Hannah**
GBR
2:10.89

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Hosszu (HUN)
- 2. Muffat (FRA)
- 3. Miley (GBR)

PAYOFF

- 1.
- ▼ 4.
- 3.

WR: 2:06.15 (Ariana Kukors)
ER: 2:07.46 (Katinka Hosszu)

Katinka Hosszu and Evelyn Verraszto delivered a double medley triumph to a euphoric local crowd, who cheered all the louder after a similar double had been denied them on the opening day. Three days after Britain's Hannah Miley had spoiled the Hungarian party by winning the 400 medley ahead of world champion Hosszu and Zsuzsanna Jakabos, the tables were turned in a truly thrilling 200m final. Camille Muffat, the 2008 European bronze medallist, had broken the championship record in the semi-finals and led the way at a hectic pace through the butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke legs. But the

French swimmer paid for her boldness as she wilted on the concluding freestyle and was passed by the two Hungarians and Miley. Hosszu, world bronze medallist in this event in 2009, charged through from third at the last turn to win in a championship record 2:10.09 and pip Verraszto, European silver medallist for the second time, by just 0.01 seconds. Miley claimed bronze in 2:10.89, with Muffat more than a second behind and defending champion Mireia Belmonte of Spain fifth.

400m

-  **1. MILEY Hannah**
GBR
4:33.09 **CR**
-  **2. HOSSZU Katinka**
HUN
4:36.43
-  **3. JAKABOS Zsuzsanna**
HUN
4:37.92

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Hosszu (HUN)
- 2. Miley (GBR)
- 3. Belmonte (ESP)

PAYOFF

- ▼ 2.
- ▲ 1.
- ▼ 10.

WR: 4:29.45 (Stephanie Rice)
ER: 4:30.31 (Katinka Hosszu)

A day after her 21st birthday, Hannah Miley (GBR) joyously celebrated a fine victory over the world champion, local favourite Katinka Hosszu, and became the first British swimmer ever to win the European 400m medley long-course crown. Miley overcame Hosszu and fellow Hungarian Zsuzsanna Jakabos to capture gold. It completed a golden European double for Miley, who won the 400 medley short-course title in 2009. Hosszu stamped her authority on the opening butterfly and backstroke legs but Miley, third at the halfway mark, capitalised on her powerful breaststroke to take a commanding lead. The Scot, fourth behind the victorious Hosszu at the 2009 World Championships, stretched away

on the final freestyle leg to win by more than three seconds in a championship record 4:33.09, richly deserving the gold medal she received from former Olympic champion Krisztina Egerszegi, the hometown heroine whose two Hungarian compatriots had to settle for silver and bronze in an event she herself won three times. Miley's time was an impressive 2.01 seconds inside the eight-year-old European championship mark of multi-Olympic gold medallist Yana Klochkova. Hosszu, European silver medallist in 2008, was left with silver again in 4:36.43, well outside the 4:30.31 European record she set in the fast-suit days of the 2009 World Championships. Jakabos took the bronze in 4:37.92.

Belles of Budapest: Zsuzsanna Jakabos (top) won silver a bronze, reacts; Katinka Hosszu (L) took three gold and a silver and Evelyn Verraszto gold and silver to send the host nation wild

"I wished we would have been joint first and not separated by the one hundredth of a second. It was an amazing finish and I heard the crowd all the time" – Hosszu.

„We reviewed the finish for a couple of times: it was just the same case of Phelps and Cavic: Verraszto touched the wall first but it was Hosszu who pushed it with the necessary strength" – said a swimming fanatic cameraman of the host broadcaster MTV.



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Hannah Miley

Smiley Miley's Family Affair

Britain's Hannah Miley could hardly believe the time on the clock when she looked up and saw 4:33.09 next to her name and No 1, after a 400m medley battle that ended with world champion Katinka Hosszu (HUN) on 4:36.43 for silver. Miley's new measure post shiny suits was just 0.2sec away from the world record that had stood to Katie Hoff (USA) until early 2008. "Unbelievable, unexpected," was how Miley described her performance.

Zsuzsanna Jakabos gave Hungary a second medal, on 4:37.92, while legendary Krisztina Egervári, winner of five solo gold medals at the Olympic Games, including, in 1992, the 400 IM, was on hand to present the medals. "What an honour that was," said Miley, a swimming scholar as far as knowing the names and times of the greats who went before her.

All victories mean much to the families of swimmers but there is an added edge when dad is the coach too. Patrick, a helicopter pilot, trains his daughter (and two younger sons), in Garioch, Aberdeenshire. He noticed that she was particularly nervous before the final and stepped in just at the right moment. "Dad told me to trust in what we've done to get ready for this, to relax and take it as another experience. I really enjoyed the race, it was so much fun. I felt brilliant."

So did dad, who said: "I'm just really emotional. She's an inspiration for me - and I'm her coach." Family and partners in the pool, Team Miley had tweaked their preparations this year to take account of the swimmer's maturity and passage into the realms of senior of some experience. "I am there but she is the one who decides things, she sets her own course and I think that's really important," said Miley Snr. The champion described well what her coach means to her: "There is a strong relationship between the two of us, and as an athlete I couldn't ask for anything better: he knows me best, he knows my limits and will push me if he knows I can go that little bit further. He has

ensured that I can operate independently too; this is vital to the way that we work as a team."

The Alfred Hajos pool meant much too to a swimmer who also won bronze in the 200m medley and as a member of the Britain 4x200m freestyle quartet. At the same pool in 2005, on the first occasion that Miley and Hosszu met in competition, the Hungarian won gold at the European Junior Championships, Miley, on her Britain debut, taking silver. That moment was pivotal in Miley's career. "It was euphoric... It was a real turning point in my career, it made me realise that this is what I wanted to do and [gave] me the confidence to believe in my potential," said Miley, European short-course cham-

pion last December but never a long-course champion before.

"I've gone so close, so many times but to win that first international title is just amazing," said Miley. "To do it against the world champion in her home pool is the stuff of dreams." Now she dreams of a new pool and better facilities as nearby Aberdeen finally starts to put plans for a 50m complex into place. "Our regular pool has been closed for works and I've had to train in one pool in a public lane and with people doing aqua-aerobics," laughed Miley. "It's not ideal. I try to get round it by training at 2pm instead of later, so that the pool is not so busy. But there's something to be said for doing it without everything being perfect. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, as they say."

By Craig LORD



"I'm not a shiny suit-swimmer"

Did you eventually manage to speak to your coach Dave Salo about your breaststroke technique before the 200m final, and did you send him the video?

No I didn't in the end. I went to the warm-up pool with László Cseh and our most experienced breaststroke swimmers, Richárd Bodor, and they watched what I was doing.

And?

They told me my leg stroke had fallen apart and in the end I was no longer using it to push off with. I'm very grateful because they really helped me a lot. Not just because I was able to pick up speed during the breaststroke, but also because I then had more strength left over for the final 50m freestyle. I really missed these reserves of strength in

the 400. In any case it was the same situation in Rome, but that was at the World Championships and Dave was there for the Americans, so we did five minutes' technical work and I got two seconds back in the 200 right away.

How upset were you about not winning in the 400 - the event in which you were competing as World Champion?

Not at all. There were other factors that freaked me out: first the fact that we finished just a few centimetres behind in the 4x100 freestyle relay (but then made amends in the 4x200). And then the newspapers published headlines such as: only silver instead of gold... I've completely forgotten about this attitude in California and time and again I'm surprised about the extent to which values

Katinka Hosszu

have been turned on their head here in Hungary. People are too pessimistic and don't appreciate success - to be more precise, they don't regard a European Championships silver medal as a success. I expected more of myself as well and can honestly say that I wasn't happy on Monday evening, but I didn't feel like some kind of tragedy had occurred. I somehow felt it wouldn't be my day before hand, but - thanks to my many friends - I managed to set things right in my mind afterwards, I could hardly wait for the 200 and got so mad at some not-very-nice, or we could even call them vicious comments that at times I would definitely have started shooting if I'd been holding a gun.

What's it like to beat your teammate by just one hundredth of a second?

To be honest: not very good. It would have been much fairer if we had touched home at the same time, and Evelyn (Verrasztó) had also claimed a gold medal. But it doesn't matter, we can practise finishing in a dead-heat... In any case I thought I'd lost because Evelyn has longer arms than me - yet somehow I managed to win. However, perhaps it was also necessary for my relay gold, as I was sure Evelyn would be angry enough to bring home the gold, as the last swimmer in the 4x200. At least I felt this way before the last 50, as I had almost fainted before the European Championships when our head coach László Kiss said that he didn't want to place any extra burden on our shoulders, but he believed we would win, but then he was right in the end.

A lot of opinions have been expressed with regard to your breakthrough last year: for example that we'll only find out later whether you made such a breakthrough because of the American environment or the super-suit.

This gold medal was also important because I proved that I'm not a shiny suit swimmer, last year's results were not down to the super-suits and I'm also pretty good in traditional textile. In other words, there is no doubt that being able to train under Dave at USC really meant a lot to me.

By Gergely CSURKA



The winners

4X100m free

-  1. Germany
3:37.72
-  2. Great Britain
3:38.57
-  3. Sweden
3:38.81

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Netherlands
- 2. Germany

PAYOFF

- ▼ 6.
- ▲ 1.

WR: 3:31.72 (Netherlands)
ER: 3:31.72 (Netherlands)

Germany could not call on world and Olympic champion Britta Steffen this time but they were still too good for their rivals as they recaptured the relay crown they had won in the same Margaret Island pool four years earlier. Daniela Schreiber hoisted the German quartet from fourth to first on the final leg to take them back to the top spot on the podium they had occupied when Steffen, beset this year by illness and injury, led them to a world record in 2006. The lead changed hands on each leg of the 2010 edition of the race. Evelyn Verraszto edged hosts Hungary to the front on the opening leg but Francesca Halsall, world

silver medallist behind Steffen in 2009, seized the initiative for Britain on the second leg with a split of 53.05. Sarah Sjoestrom gained a tiny 0.02-second advantage for Sweden over Britain on the third leg but Schreiber swept through on the last to nail the German victory. Germany came home in 3:37.72, with Britain taking silver in 3:38.57 and Sweden bronze in 3:38.81. The Dutch reigning Olympic and world champions were missing Marleen Veldhuis, who had a baby in June, Inge Dekker, who had a shoulder injury, and Ranomi Kromowidjojo, who was recovering from meningitis.



Pride of place:
Germany's team celebrate a gold medal they thought was at risk in the absence of sprint queen Britta Steffen

"A great championship finish with a success for our team. I'm pleased to have got two gold, two silver and one bronze medal, a medal tally I never expected. It's amazing,"
– Fran Halsall, the most successful British swimmer at one championships in history.

4X200m free

-  1. Hungary
7:52.49
-  2. France
7:52.69
-  3. Great Britain
7:55.29

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Italy
- 2. France
- 3. Great Britain

PAYOFF

- DNS
- 2.
- 3.

WR: 7:42.08 (China)
ER: 7:45.51 (Great Britain)

Budapest boisterously celebrated a sunlit evening of Hungarian rhapsody and their relay quartet completed the triple golden score. The home crowd had shouted Katinak Hosszu and Evelyn Verraszto to a one-two triumph in the 200 individual medley and roared Daniel Gyurta to victory in the 200 breaststroke but still had plenty of voice to yell their encouragement to the 4x200 freestyle relay squad. It could not have been much closer, Verraszto delivering the coup de grace amid pandemonium in the stands to kill off the challenge of the French defending champions on a hard day for their anchor, Catherine Muffat. Agnes Mutina gave Hungary the

lead on the first leg but Ophelie Etienne, silver medallist in the 800 freestyle at the start of the session, handed over a clear lead for France on the second. Hosszu edged Hungary in front on the third, leaving the stage set for a duel between Verraszto and Muffat. Muffat, who had seen victory in the 200 medley snatched from her grasp by the Hungarians, moved dead level with Verraszto at the end of the first length, slipped just behind on the second but turned ahead again with one length to go. Verraszto, however, lifted by the passion of the crowd, was not to be denied and tore through to win by two-tenths of a second. It was Hungary's first relay victory since 1954 and the crowd hailed it with fitting fervour.



Home heroes:
Hungary's relay team members (L-R), Evelyn Verraszto, Katinak Hosszu, Eszter Dara and Agnes Mutina taste a rare relay gold

4X100m medley

-  1. Great Britain
4:03.92
-  2. Sweden
4:01.18
-  3. Germany
4:03.22

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Great Britain
- 2. Germany
- 3. Netherlands

PAYOFF

- 1.
- ▼ 3.
- DNS

WR: 3:52.19 (China)
ER: 3:55.79 (Germany)

Britain retained the medley relay crown they appeared to have lost when the Russian 'winners' were disqualified for a faulty take-over. After a lengthy wait for all eight teams at the end of the pool, the electronic scoreboard showed Britain first and Russia disqualified. The reason, it transpired, was that European breaststroke double champion Yuliya Efimova had taken over too soon from backstroker Maria Gromova - 0.12 seconds early when a 0.03 margin is the maximum permitted. Gemma Spofforth, the world and newly crowned European champion, gave Britain the lead on backstroke before Efimova lifted

Russia from third to first, ahead of Kate Haywood. Irina Bepalova and Margarita Nesterova kept Britain's chasing Francesca Halsall and Amy Smith at bay but in the end they had swum in vain. Britain, 0.33 seconds behind the Russians at the end, were awarded gold in 3:59.72, with Sweden taking silver in 4:01.18 and European record holders Germany moving up to bronze in 4:03.22. "We wanted to win it in our own way and I'm a little bit disappointed that we didn't," Spofforth said.



Last laugh:
members of Britain's relay (L-R), Kate Haywood, Amy Smith, Francesca Halsall and Gemma Spofforth celebrate gold after Russia suffered a DQ

Race reviews
by Derek PARR
LEN Magazine
/former Reuters
correspondent,
Great Britain



DIVING



Predicti☺n Diving



ITA	3	0	2
GER	2	3	3
RUS	2	2	2
UKR	2	2	1
GBR	1	1	2
SWE	0	2	0

Pay☺ff Diving



1.	GER	5	3	0	8
2.	UKR	2	2	0	4
3.	ITA	2	1	0	3
4.	RUS	1	3	5	9
5.	SWE	0	1	0	1
6.	BLR	0	0	2	2
7.	ESP	0	0	1	1
	GBR	0	0	1	1
	HUN	0	0	1	1



The winners

1m

		1. Cagnotto Tania ITA 299.70
		2. Lindberg Anna SWE 293.70
		3. Pozdnyakova Anastasia RUS 282.65

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Cagnotto (ITA)	● 1.
2. Lindberg (SWE)	● 2.
3. Marconi (ITA)	▼ 4.

3m

		1. Bazhina Nadezda RUS 324.10
		2. Pozdnyakova Anastasia RUS 316.40
		3. Barta Nóra HUN 291.75

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Cagnotto (ITA)	▼ 6.
2. Lindberg (SWE)	▼ 5.
3. Fedorova (UKR)	▼ 9.

10m

		1. Steuer Christin GER 354.50
		2. Batki Noemi ITA 343.80
		3. Koltunova Yulia RUS 340.45

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Koltunova (RUS)	▼ 3.
2. Subschinski (GER)	▼ 4.
3. Steuer (GER)	▲ 1.

German Harvest in

After Eindhoven 2008, Turin 2009, here we are with the main European 2010 challenge in diving. In the fabulous diving facility on Margaret Island in Budapest the best divers of Europe met to share 10 European titles and 30 medals. A new Team Event competition, with a European formula was introduced as a test event before the official competition unfolded, with 13 countries entering a team.

Germany was the leading nation, taking the overall LEN Team Trophy, Russia in second place and Ukraine third. On medals, Germany held the helm ahead of Ukraine and Italy. With 9 podium visits, Russia had the most medals, Germany second-best on 8.

Women

In the women's 1m, Tania Cagnotto, the winner from Turin09, and comeback queen Anna Lindberg, returning after having had a baby, it came down to the last dive: a 303B for Tania and a 403B for Anna, both executed in a perfect manner, with the highest scores granting gold for Tania and silver for Anna by 6 points. The quality average of Tania, with 299.70 points, was 8.1, while Anna, 293.70, had 8.0. Only three athletes showed a 305c DD 3.0, all the other dives were equal or below 2.6.

The women's 3m held many surprises; Tania Cagnotto first in prelims had a bad evening, leaving the field open. Anybody could have been the winner this time but the two Russian divers, Bazhina Nadezda, a daughter of Irina Kalinina a former Olympic champion (1980), and Anastasia Pozdnyakova took gold and silver. The quality average of Bazhina was 7.6.

A masterpiece of motivation was on show in the form of Hungarian champi-

on Nora Barta, who took bronze after overcoming a series of problems, including back surgery, in recent years. Her face was like an open book, emotion there for all to see during the victory ceremony. In fourth place, Britain's 13-year-old Grace Reid finished ahead of Lindberg and Cagnotto, 5th and 6th respectively.

The tower competition of the women had 19 participants and the German diver Christin Steuer, age 27, scored 354.50 points, winning the gold and reflecting the good form of the whole German team in Budapest. Her quality average was 7.6 and her worst dive was the 405B, while the armstand and the twisting dive brought her the best scores.

In second place, coming from 5th in the preliminaries, Noemi Batki, on 343.80 and from Italy, won her first European silver in an individual competition off the 10m board. Her programme



Family affair:
Nadezda Bazhina, daughter of
Irina Kalinina, 1980 Olympic champion
won 3m gold

Nora Barta (HUN) overcame
a topsy turvy time to win 3m bronze

is not the hardest, with a 15.0 total compared to the bronze medalist Yulia Koltunova (first in prelims), with a 15.8 total DD, having finally taken the risk to substitute a simple 301B, executed in Rome at the Worlds, with a high DD 207C. In fourth place the German Nora Subschinski had a total DD of 15.9.

Just eight teams entered the women's synchro 10m event and all went through to the final. The gold went to the German team Steuer/Subschinski 13 points ahead of the Ukraine team

Prokopchuk/Chaplenko. The Germans are the only team performing an armstand back double somersault with one and one half twist, which is very hard to synchronize. The Hungarian team in 6th place also did a good job and was cheered on by the local public.

The last day of the synchro competition, on 3m, saw Italy's dream team Cagnotto/Dallapé on 327.90, winning gold ahead of the Ukraine team Fedorova/Pysmenska, 312.00, and the Russian team Pozdnyakova/Filippova, 307.50. The Italian team was second at the Worlds in Rome09 and also won the FINA Grand Prix in Ft. Lauderdale and in Bolzano his year ahead of Chinese selections.

		3m synchro 1. Cagnotto Tania, Dallapé Francesca ITA 327.90
		2. Fedorova Olena, Pysmenska Anna UKR 312.00
		3. Pozdnyakova Anast., Filippova Svetlana RUS 307.50

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Cagnotto, Dallapé (ITA)	● 1.
2. Dieckow, Subschinski (GER)	▼ 4.
3. Filippova, Pozdnyakova (RUS)	● 3.

		1. Steuer Christin, Subschinski Nora GER 319.68
		2. Prokopchuk Lulia, Chaplenko Alina UKR 306.30
		3. Gladding Monique, Sylvester Megan GBR 300.66

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Koltunova, Goncharova (RUS)	▼ 5.
2. Steuer, Subschinski (GER)	▲ 1.
3. Galashan, Galashan (GBR)	DNS

Photo:
REUTERS/
BALINT
MEGGYESI



MEN DIVING



The winners

1m

		1. Kvasha Ilyia UKR 433.90
		2. Hausding Patrick GER 430.25
		3. Illana Javier ESP 414.35

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Kvasha (UKR)	● 1.
2. Waterfield (GBR)	DNS
3. Rozenberg (GER)	▼ 27.

3m

		1. Hausding Patrick GER 463.20
		2. Zakharov Ilya RUS 458.15
		3. Kuznetsov Evgeny RUS 455.80

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Klein (GER)	▼ 5.
2. Kvasha (UKR)	▼ 6.
3. Hausding (GER)	▲ 1.

10m

		1 Klein Sascha GER 534.85
		2 Hausding Patrick GER 516.45
		3 Kaptur Vadim BLR 515.80

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Daley (GBR)	DNS
2. Kravchenko (RUS)	DNS
3. Dobroskok (RUS)	DNS

Men

The 1m contest with 31 competitors was a fight between very strong divers. Five out of the twelve finalists performed a 305B, four a 107B and eight a 5152B with very good scores: a sign that European diving is advancing.

Ilyia Kvasha, 22, is Ukraine's most talented diver, winning the contest with 433,90 points and an average quality mark of 7.8. Patrick Hausding, 21 and Germany's upcoming star, took second 3.65 points behind, the bronze going to the best of Spain, 25-year-old Illana Javier, on 414,35 (7.5).

On 3m, Russian Ilya Zakharov (19) was leading the competition by 18.75 points until the second last dive, when Patrick Hausding scored 91,80 on his last dive to take the gold medal with 463.20 points, 5,05 more than Ilya. The bronze medal went to Russian Evgeny Kuznetsov, 20, on 455,80 points. To enter the final: 371,90 points needed.

The most spectacular competition of all events was the male tower competition, which concluded the meet on a high note. In the prelims, 376.80 points were needed to be qualified among the 12 best. The winner, Sascha Klein, from Germany, winner at the Beijing World Cup before the Olympics, did an outstanding job, with 534.85 points and a quality average of 8,5. The silver went to Patrick Hausding, 516.45 and 8,7, 1.00 DD point less than Sascha. Each of them missed one dive but were still ahead of Vadim Kaptur (BLR), who did not miss any dive and has an exceptional quality of 9,00, but with a 1,8 lower total DD than the winner.

Sascha Klein was the only diver in the championship to score a perfect 10 from all Judges, on his 307C, for 99.00 points. Both German divers had one dive with a total score of 102.60 points in their list, with a DD of 3.6 and both were performed with 9 ½. The most difficult programme was shown by the Russian Victor Minibaev with a total DD of 21.0, but executed with 8.1 average marks, which was not enough for him to step on the podium. The fifth place of Anton Zakharov (UKR), on 506.20, is still one of the five best scores over 500 points. Thomas Daley, Britain's best diver, did not compete because of an injury to his triceps.

The male synchro events were also very interesting, with 13 teams on 3m but only 6 teams on platform. Team Ukraine Kvasha/Prygorov won the springboard competition with 431,67 points, very

close to the German team Feck /Hausding, 427,95. In third place Team Russia with Sautin/Kunakov won the bronze medal - and Sautin's 18th European Championships medal. In fourth place the Italian Team with a replacement in the last moment of diver Nicola Marconi (injured) by Michele Benedetti.

The platform synchro event was a fight between team Germany (Klein/Hausding) and team Russia (Minibaev/Zakharov). The Germans were ahead in prelims and kept their position in the final. The leadership alternated between the two teams during the final, "match point" coming down to the last point. The same last dive for both and the tension was very high as the teams chased gold. Germany scored 97,20 points, while Russia, also with a beautiful dive, scored 85,32. Both teams achieved a very high level of performance, 478.11 points for Germany and 466.95 points for Russia. The bronze medal went to Belorus (Hordeichik/Kaptur), on 426,03 points.

Big and Klein: Sascha Klein and the diver of the championship Patrick Hausding join forces for Germany

Twist and Shout: Sascha Klein (GER) on his way to gold



The team from Great Britain (Tom Daley and Max Brick) had been expected to win a medal but Daley's injury forced them to withdraw so that Daley could focus on the Commonwealth Games.

THE TEAM EVENT

The team event was presented as a test event the day before the official competition started. Thirteen nations took part, more than in some synchro events. The European program of this event is formatted to allow wider nation participation. One boy and one girl perform 3 dives each, 3 dives from 10m and 3 dives from 3m, one dive for each diver must be from the opposite height and 6 groups must be in the program. Two dives have a set DD of 2.0 and may be performed freely in all possible combinations.

After the competition, the LEN technical diving committee distributed a questionnaire asking for feedback on the competition. All responses liked the restricted DD dives and all the main rules. Proposals included an obligatory easy dive pro gender; to have prelims and finals; to start with the easy dives or to have alternated dives from 3m and 10m for each team. The start in team order was well received.

LEN's committee will tweak the formula and the intention is to make the next test in Turin at the 2011 Arena European Championships.

In summary, Europe discovered a superb diver in Budapest: Patrick Hausding is talented, powerful and competed in all five (5) disciplines, winning a medal in each event (2 gold and 3 silver medals), a record beyond the four medals of Dmitry Sautin.

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Klein, Hausding (GER)	● 1.
2. Vikulov, Kravchenko (UKR)	DNS
3. Charabini, Dell'Uomo (ITA)	▼ 5.

Since FINA corrected some DD's at Rome Congress last year, top divers' have tended to learn the new dives quickly to gain more points. So in the men's 3m event, in final three, 109Cs were shown and multiple twists such as 5337D and 5237D were chosen again by some divers in the 3m and 10m events.



*By Klaus DIBIASI
Former Olympic Champion,
Italy*

		1. Kvasha Ilyia, Prygorov Oleksiy UKR 431.67
		2. Feck Stephan, Hausding Patrick GER 427.95
		3. Sautin Dmitry, Kunakov Yuri RUS 410.43

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Kvasha, Prygorov (UKR)	● 1.
2. Zakharov, Galperin (RUS)	DNS
3. Sautin, Kunakov (RUS)	● 3.

		1. Klein Sascha, Hausding Patrick GER 478.11
		2. Minibaev Victor, Zakharov Ilya RUS 466.95
		3. Hordeichik Timofei, Kaptur Vadim BLR 426.03



Patrick Hausding

Five-podium pioneer

Patrick Hausding is only 21 years' old - and has already secured a place in diving history. The German, who lives in the capital Berlin, was the first diver to pick up a medal in all five disciplines at any European Championships. Two golds and three silvers represented the yield for this member of the German Army, who appears not to suffer from nerves. With a coolness and cleverness rarely witnessed, he dived from fourth place to clinch the gold medal with his final dive from 3m board (463.20). He also ensured the final dive from the platform was decisive, taking silver (516.45) behind his superb team colleague Sascha Klein (534.85). The previous day the pair had won synchronised gold together, from the same height (478.11). And Patrick Hausding had Stephan Feck at his side when winning the silver medal in the synchro diving from the 3m board. The German had begun his incredible series in Budapest with silver on the 1m board (430.25). Until now diving legend Dmitri Sautin (Russia) was the yardstick, with three golds and one silver at the 2000 European Championships in Helsinki.

What was this historic week on Margaret Island in Budapest like for you?

I really hadn't expected this. The prospect of standing there with five medals around my neck. But when I think about it, everything went quite mechanical, coming home with a medal every day.

No doubt it wasn't easy to focus every day, to compete in qualifying rounds and finals, which all drains your energy, and yet to appear quite casual ...

... sometimes that was just the way it looked. I was pretty nervous at the beginning, but things kept getting better with each competition and each medal. You just have to go into a competition in the right frame of mind, and then everything works easily. Especially as the 1m board is not exactly my main discipline. To win silver here right at the start wasn't bad at all. And nor was it bad for the other competitions.

How great was the pressure in general?

It really wasn't so bad. I would have been satisfied with three medals. No matter what colour. And then there was the fact that my competitors made their mistakes and I was able to profit from them, as I mostly got by without any major errors.

No doubt you also needed a large degree of concentration, for example when you were still in fourth place before the final dive from the 3m board and then catapulted yourself to the title?

You certainly have to concentrate, but that was a really cool dive. It was quite simply optimal - and shocked my competitors.

With your five medals at the age of just 21 you have even outdone Dmitri Sautin, who once went home with four medals ...

... but whether I'll manage this again in future years is more doubtful. Quite a lot of things have to come together and work out really well.

But you still have almost your entire career ahead of you. Not only will the 2012 Olympics in London be your goal, but no doubt also the Games in Rio de Janeiro four years later?

Rio and 2016 is definitely a goal for me, especially as I would then be the best age for a diver, at 27. But we'll have to see how things work out until then, hopefully without injuries. That is quite important.

So how do you balance training techniques for the five disciplines?

I benefit a lot from synchro training on the 3m board and the platform. This means that, along with my partner Stephan Feck, there are four dives in the 3m board program, which we also dive in the individual event. And there are three on the platform, with Sascha Klein. But I also tend to compete in the individual platform diving as a matter of course ... and the same is true of the 1m board.

In the meantime you have just been watching the platform dives of the winner Sascha Klein again and again. What was going through your mind when he was awarded seven maximum scores of ten for his penultimate dive?

It was simply brilliant. It's the only way he can win. It was a really fantastic dive by him and he really deserved gold after that.

Your competitors in Budapest must be getting increasingly desperate about the Germans. For a long time not much is seen of them, they're not in the first three and then they snatch the medals away from the others in the final phase ...

... but this was just down to the fact that our competitors simply made mistakes. They had the chance of beating us in their own hands. And then there was the fact that we started out in top condition in Hungary and competed in a scheduled preparatory event. We also competed in a large number of international events in the run-up to the Europeans this year and gained a great deal of experience there.

By Hans-Peter SICK

Good day: Ilya Kvasha sunshine

Photo: REUTERS

Two gold medals, one in the 1m, one in the 3m synchro, you ought to be smiling!

Well, I missed the 3m springboard medal, finished only in 6th place - and that hurts a little bit.

Even if you were the only one in the final who received a 10 mark from the judges for your fourth dive?...

It doesn't make the whole much nicer. I finished 6th and that should have been better.

Can you describe what is the reason behind these ups and downs? On one day you are the best, but on the next day you cannot keep up your concentration: is it the weather, poor sleep, or something else?

Definitely not the weather. Sometimes you feel tired, just all of a sudden. That happens. And I also had problems with the lights. The 3m final was in the evening, lights were turned on and everything was different. I prefer to dive in the morning and in the afternoon, under normal circumstances.

Would you explain for our readers what the difference is?

If you have sunshine or at least normal daylight the colour of the water is less dark. When the floodlights are on, the water's colour changes and it doesn't aid your orientation.

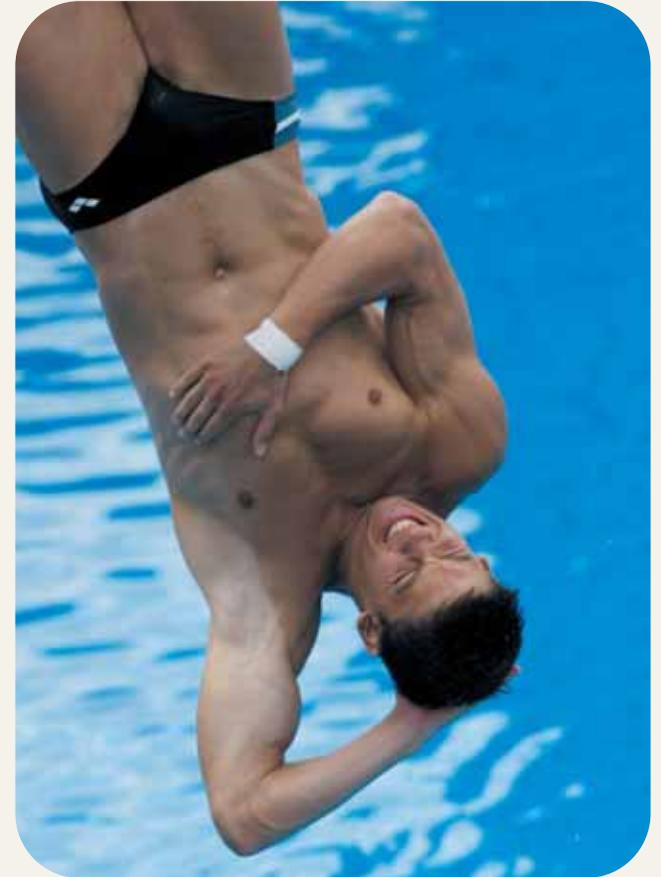
Coming to Budapest how many medals did you expect?

Two or three, rather three. On those days when I won everything it was great, so altogether I should not be dissatisfied.

These are the European Championships, where you rule the field - but what must you do in Shanghai or in London to catch the Chinese?

Well, I don't know. We'll see. Maybe, we will change some dives, but I really can't pinpoint any precise thing.

In the platform, the Chinese were



beaten for the third consecutive time, Galperin in Melbourne, Mitcham in Beijing, Daley in Rome. Does anyone have a chance to do the same in the 3m?

It's difficult to call. Maybe they work harder.

OK, let's put it in another way: can a diver from Ukraine become Olympic champion in 3m? Or you

are targeting only a medal in London?

Of course I want to be Olympic champion, what else would be my goal?! But honestly, we have a stronger chance in synchro. I'm not sure either of us from Europe can beat them in the individual competition but in synchro we should prepare to be the first. And we will prepare, I promise!

By Gergely CSURKA



Photo: REUTERS



Tania Cagnotto

“I still dream with my eyes wide open”

It took less than 24 hours to Tania Cagnotto and her team mate Francesca Dallapè, with whom she shares a 13-year long friendship, to rise from their ashes.

On Saturday night, August 14th, Tania had managed only a disappointing 6th place in the individual competition from the 3m springboard, her favourite event (Francesca just 11th).

The bad artificial lighting was blamed for the mistakes Tania and Francesca had made during the final.

Tania noted that the lighting conditions were the same for all but pointed out, “not everybody reacts in same way; I was certainly damaged in the execution of my second dive”. It was the double and a half somersault forward with one twist (5152).

Giorgio Cagnotto – her father and her coach – underlined how the bad lighting had affected the whole competition and determined low scores. Instead, in the individual event, in daylight, the problem did not exist and the scores went up to normal.

Tania made mistakes of her own but the synchro final was a different story, Cagnotto-Dallapè, performing the same dives as in the individual competition, won the event with 327,90, about the same score that earned them the gold medal at the World Championships in Rome 2009. In Budapest, they ended about 16 points ahead of the silver medallists and 20 ahead of the bronze medallists. Cagnotto and Dallapè, the latter coached by Giuliana Aor, a former international diver, competed with newly found energy and concentration to successfully defend their title from Turin 2009, when Cagnotto managed the “Triple Crown” (gold from 1 metre, 3 metres and the 3 metres synchro).

In Budapest she was aiming to repeat the same feat. On day 1, she seemed poised for success when she won the 1m crown by a narrow margin (which was interpreted as a sign of maturity and ability to control the competition). Disappointment in her 3m followed before synchro success. Cagnotto and Dallapè live 50 kilometres away from one

another, in Northern Italy: Tania in Bolzano, Francesca a little bit south, in Trento. They train together three times a week for about an hour and half at a time. They are great friends, even beyond the pool. Recently they attended a concert together and were due to go on holiday together on the Eolie Islands (near Sicily) soon after leaving Budapest. Their harmony could not be greater, and that is the secret of their synchronisation in competition. “We respect each other and we are one another great fans when we compete individually”.

Tania is often told that she is the best diver in the world, not considering the Chinese. She says modestly: “In Europe I may be the number one in some events but in the world the Canadians and the Australians are very competitive”.

Tania views Australia as an ideal place to get some good training and improve on her skills. She told us: “In autumn I will spend a couple of months in Sydney to train with Matthew Mitcham (Olympic champion 2008 from the platform) and other boys and girls”. Going to Australia is a part of a programme through which Tania will try everything to make her dream come true. As a child Tania used to dream of going at the Olympics as a diver... which she did. Now, as an adult, she still has daydreams: “I still dream with my eyes wide open; I dream of winning a medal at the next Olympiad, from the springboard”.

But why are the Chinese so good? Is it the training methods, the body building or what? What makes them different from the rest of the field? Says Tania: “It’s a mix of ingredients: their body building, their culture, the structure of their society, and, above all, their long and hard training sessions. They train almost twice the time we train as they have no time limit in the venues where they train; instead we in Italy are allowed to train for a limited time in our pools.”

Tiny Tania (160 cm, 56 kg), 25, recently moved in with her fiancé, who is not a diver, which helps her to relax at

home. If her father, Giorgio, was a great diver (he is a Hall of Famer too) so too was her mother, Carmen Casteiner, Italian champion several times over and an international. Although her parents never forced her, Tania took up diving very easily. “It has always been my sole decision; my parents never forced me to do anything, they have always seconded my choice with discretion”, she told us. What did her parents pass on to her? She says: “From my mother I inherited the courage, from my father the strength in my legs.”

She excels in skiing and dancing, elegance is part of the perfection she pursues: “I love being elegant, always: when I dance, when I dress (she loves wearing tall heeled shoes – like Federica Pellegrini) and when I dive. Elegance amuses me and amusement is my greatest motivation”.

By Camillo CAMETTI



“Not considering any new dives” Christin Steuer

Two bronze medals had been the best of Christin Steuer at World (2007 in Melbourne) and European Championships (2006 in Budapest) before a return to Margaret Island for the 27-year old member of the German Army. This time, she dived straight to gold on two occasions: first of all in the individual platform event (354.50) and then, in combination with Nora Subschinski, in the synchronised diving from the same height (319.30). While this made Christin Steuer the most successful female diver at the Europeans, her partner was celebrating her fourth triumph in succession - three times with the now retired Annett Gamm and this time with Christin Steuer

Were you actually expecting these two gold medals?

If you had told me a week before the Europeans that I would dive to two vic-

tories here, I would have asked whether you were dreaming ...

But then why did things work out so well?

Synchro diving is really the key. A lot of divers get nervous and this leads to errors being made. But Nora Subschinski and I were not really affected. Moreover, I never look at the scoreboard during a competition. I only dare to look after the last dive. Otherwise I focus on myself.

You had a strong sequence of dives here in Budapest, especially in the individual competition, were there any problem dives?

Above all I have respect for my first dive, a two-and-a-half twist dolphin somersault. This is partly why it's at the beginning, to get it out of the way.

Photo: REUTERS / BALINT MEGGYESI



You have now become European Champion with Nora Subschinski, but you started out with another diver?

Yes, first of all I dived with my twin sister Anne. But she had to end her career because of a back injury. Then I had Anke Piper at my side. For a while there was nobody at all and right now Nora Subschinski.

You live in Dresden, train in Leipzig and your partner is in Berlin. How do you train for synchro diving?

We entered a large number of competitions together this year and usually the dives are the same as those in the individual program.

Are you studying any new dives, in order to increase the degree of difficulty for example?

God forbid, I'm not going to start this at the age of 27.

Why do you predominantly dive from the platform?

I opted for the tower since I had more success there. However, it's quite possible that I could return to the 3m board sometime.

How high is your training input?

It's already around 30 hours a week. This means I do around 14,000 dives in a training year.

What other goals do you have?

Obviously the 2012 Olympic Games in London, and preferably to win a medal there. But this is more likely in synchro diving. Maybe I lack a few extra degrees of difficulty in my dives for the individual event.

What do you do away from your life as an athlete?

I enjoy life, practise other sports, such as tennis or skiing and am a family-oriented person. My sister has just had twins and so I'm also in demand as an aunt to some extent.

By Hans-Peter SICK

SYNCHRO

Predicti^{on} Synchro

			
 RUS	4	0	0
 ESP	0	4	0
 ITA	0	0	3
 UKR	0	0	1

Pay^{off} Synchro

				
1.  RUS	4	0	0	4
2.  ESP	0	4	0	4
3.  UKR	0	0	4	4



Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

Silver locket: Ona Carbonell and Andrea Fuentes, of Spain, were the latest from their nation unable to take gold from Russia



The winners

Solo

-  1. ISCHENKO Natalia
RUS
98.900
-  2. FUENTES Andrea
ESP
96.600
-  3. ANANASOVA Lolita
UKR
93.000

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Ishchenko (RUS)	● 1.
2. Fuentes (ESP)	● 2.
3. Ananasova (UKR)	● 3.

Duet

-  1. ISCHENKO Natalia
RUS
98.700
ROMASHINA Svetlana
-  2. CARBONELL Ona
ESP
96.700
FUENTES Andrea
-  3. IUSHKO Daria
UKR
93.400
SYDORENKO Kseniya

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Ishchenko, Romashina (RUS)	● 1.
2. Carbonell, Fuentes (ESP)	● 2.
3. Italian duo (ITA)	▼ 4.

The Russians, of course

A spectacular breakthrough by the Ukrainian team represented the biggest surprise in the synchronised swimming competitions - otherwise everything unfolded according to expectation: all gold medals were taken by the Russians, while the Spanish once again finished second in all events.

Tatiana Pokrovskaya's disciples enthralled everyone and proved once more in Budapest that they are in a class of their own.

Whenever the Russians performed, life came to a standstill for a while in the Budapest pool complex: the director in charge of logistics made his way to the stands, as did the guy in charge of the power supply. Everyone was of the same opinion: they are definitely worth watching. Even the clouds disappeared

for a while in a first week at the European Championships that witnessed a fair drop of rain. When it came down to it, apart from one small slip, we managed to start and finish all events on time. In other words - unlike 2006 - only dancing in the water was dominant this time, and not the singing in the rain (in the stands).

The Russians were dominant too: the big question is when anyone will finally have even the remotest chance of catching them up. They simply don't make any mistakes and it would be foolish to expect any - they train more than anyone else, they have a lot more opportunities to dive into the water than anyone else, i.e. when taking the stage they create perfect performances time after time. Although we could look to the winter artistic sport of figure skating, where they cleaned up at the Turin Olympics in 2006 and yet failed to win a single gold medal in Vancouver in 2010. But whichever way we look at it, it's difficult to imagine such a big turnaround in synchronised swimming in four years.

We have often searched for the reason why in the columns of this magazine. We know that the fantastic traditions of Russian culture guarantee a very significant advantage: the ballet is world famous, the standard of choreography and creativity are at a level beyond comparison with any other country. And then don't forget the circus, also an art form in Russia. Put all of that together and you have an unbeatable points-winning force. And given that more young talented people are choosing this sport than in any other country, even the sixth or seventh member of the Russian team is a better synchronised swimmer than the best of their rivals. According to some estimates, if three competitors from the same country were allowed in the solo or duet events, the Russians would be guaranteed to take the silver and bronze medals as well.

The difference is perhaps best reflected in the words of one of the judges for the Budapest competition,

Team winners

1. Russia	99.000
2. Spain	96.900
3. Ukraine	92.800

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Russia	● 1.
2. Spain	● 2.
3. Italy	▼ 4.

Combo winners

1. Russia	98.300
2. Spain	97.000
3. Ukraine	94.100

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Russia	● 1.
2. Spain	● 2.
3. Italy	▼ 4.

Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

Sisterly support: Russia on their way to the team free routine title



Britain's Jennifer Gray: "The Russians' technical skills are so flawless that there are no limits to the choreographers' imagination. Whatever they come up with the girls are able to carry it out - elsewhere the athletes' capabilities restrict the choreographer's options."

The choice of music is also important: the general professional opinion is that each individual bar is always in the right place for the Russians. Time after time they come out with music, which is ideally suited to the series of movements, and therefore, in addition to the spectacle, viewers - and of course judges - are also enthralled by the audio effect.

Even the solo competitor's music is perfectly composed - is how Jennifer Gray describes Natalia Ishchenko's performance: "She hovers almost continuously on top of the water, you don't have the feeling she is fighting and struggling against the water."

Naturally all countries are making progress in the parts of the sport that can be learned, in the area of lifts and

Judging: OK!

Jennifer Gray believes the judges are increasingly unified in the area of scoring, in which anomalies are almost a thing of the past, despite the fact that the majority of scorers don't have much opportunity to gain international experience. It is not uncommon for the August European Championships to be the second or third occasion in a year when a judge is able to award scores at an international competition - fortunately experience and further training courses held by TSSC may help to improve this situation.

I've been involved in the sport for 40 years and don't think they can surprise me any longer, the Russian team manages to do so time and again", says Gray, who believes nobody has come out with anything new and unprecedented, though the series of movements, the transitions between the individual elements are becoming ever faster - this is where progress can essentially be experienced. A new trend is that singers have returned, primarily in the solo events, i.e. you can listen not only to the music, but also to the lyrics. Of course, nobody would ever object to a good Edith Piaf song.



by Gergely CSURKA
Editor-in-chief
LEN Magazine

throws for example, the Ukrainians, who produced such a breakthrough, will soon be on the same level as the Russians - but the ingenuity and variety of the choreography mean they continue to stand out from the field. "Although



Natalia Ischenko

6 kg shed are worth their weight in gold

On her international senior debut at the European Cup in 2003, Natalia Ischenko finished fourth. She arrived on the national team just as a great champion, Olga Brusnikina, retired. Neither Anastasia Davydova, nor Anastasia Ermakova wanted to compete in solo, so 18-year-old Natalia became the leader of the team in this discipline.

Her first medal was silver, at the European Championships in Madrid, 2004.

Natalia's coach, Natiana Danchenko, has long noted her charge's exceptional ability to interpret music in aquatic movement.

Natalia began her synchro career at the age of 5 in Kaliningrad. Ischenko's first coach, Lada Stepanovich, moved to synchronised swimming from rhythmic gymnastics and instilled in Natalia the disciplines and athleticism of that sport too.

Natalia came to Budapest as 10-time world champion and left the city as 7-time European gold medallist. Since her last appearance in international competition (Rome 2009 world titles) she has shed 6 kilos, a weight loss that has made the athlete all the more impressive in her routines.

Natalia, you took part in so many events here...

Yes. I never did Duo before the last World Championships in Rome. Until the Beijing Olympics Ermakova and Davydova owned this event. Even in Rome I took part in Free Routine in Duos – Davydova and Romashina competed in the Technical event. Here in Budapest I took part in 9 separate events, including preliminaries.

Do you ever feel that you need some rest?

Sometimes I really do. But there is no chance. So I made the decision: 'till I'm

able to compete in every discipline, I'll do it. If something goes wrong, I'll make my choice in order to reduce the number of events.

What discipline is the top ranked?

No idea. I never thought about it. My plan is to keep the same competition schedule 'till 2012 Olympics. I hope that I'll be strong enough to survive.

How long have you been in a duo team with Svetlana Romashina?

We have been in the national team since 2005. We took part in the European Cup. In our sport that is the only competition where two duos from one country are allowed. Concerning the other big competition the place was strictly occupied by Ermakova and Davydova, as I already said.

Aren't you afraid that Ermakova and Davydova will return back to the team in the Olympic season and you will move to reserve together with Romashina?

I hope it won't be so. Ermakova and Davydova were in the same situation in 2004 when Olga Brusnikina and Maria Kisseleva tried to come back. They fought for a long time for their places in the Olympic team, so they remember how terrible such a situation can be. But if they suddenly did come back to synchro as a duo team, we will also fight, for our places, me and Svetlana. Our sport is cruel: In 2004 I had a good chance to join the Olympic team but later four girls from the golden 2000 team came back and there was no place for the young girls.

You and Romashina are real team veterans now. Aren't you afraid of losing your team leadership in Budapest to the many newcomers in the group?

We were very nervous, that's true. Our summer preparation started with the serious illness of one girl, then the other one had surgery. The third was injured during the last training camp, so the

coaches were persuaded to add junior swimmers to the group and ask Olga Kuzhela and Anastasia Ermakova (both had already retired) to come back to sport urgently. So many changes never happened as far as I can recall. When you work with the same people for a long time it's enough to change one of them and everything starts to shake and be destroyed. You have to start from the very beginning: to learn how the new partner moves under the water, to get used to that... Actually we're happy that all these changes happened one month before the championships, not later.

What difference is there between veterans and newcomers?

No difference at all. The younger ones carry the recorder to the pool and back.

Were you worrying about the result before the combination final?

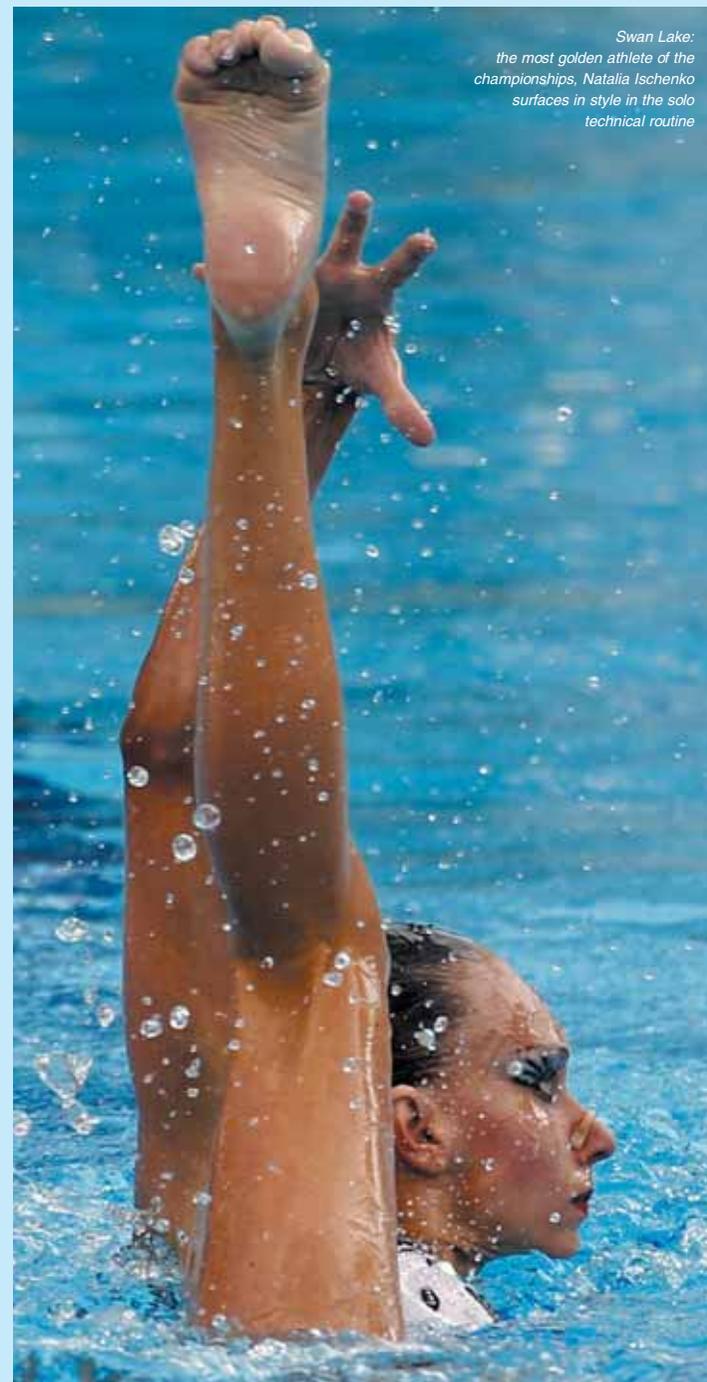
I was more nervous before the solo. I don't know why – there was no reason, but... It's not a kind of fear to lose. Maybe we were afraid not to do everything as planned.

Are you able to control what's going on in the water when you compete in the group?

Yes of course. I see a lot, I notice all mistakes. I feel a lot at least. Those girls who prepare the lifts under the water, for instance, always feel in advance how successful the "upper" part of every lift will be.

The lifts of the Russian team in Free program were extremely complicated. Do you ever think at the beginning of the season that the ideas offered by your group coach Tatyana Pokrovskaya are not realistic in terms of you being able to fulfill them?

That is our normal feeling at the beginning of every season. We cry, we say "that's impossible", we start to try the new elements and all of a sudden we realise that the program "fits". There are



Swan Lake: the most golden athlete of the championships, Natalia Ischenko surfaces in style in the solo technical routine

Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH

a lot of elements that are not so impressive as lifts, but need a lot of concentration as well. Some of the transmissions swimmers used to perform in duos, but there are only two partners there. And eight in the group. Sometimes it is necessary to build the whole thing without seeing the surface of the water, sometimes it is very important to move fast and with precision. We often hope that Pokrovskaya will say: "Okay, girls, it's really impossible, stop to do it". But she stays silent 'till we've done everything well. Concerning the double lift in our Free routine, it's more difficult for those who work under the water. My task is to make the first jump and to return back to the start position as soon as possible.

That's why I guess you lost so much weight?

No, that's not connected. I eat all the time between the training sessions, but we spend 10 hours a day in the water. That makes my body slim.

It can be a problem – to loose weight before the competition. The body changes, the balance changes, the feelings change too...

When you lose weight right before the competition, that's true. But my case is different. I lost my six kilos step by step. I adapted well to my new weight. It is easier now. Especially for the girls who have to lift my body in the water.

Do you count your gold medals?

Just some of them, from big competition. Before coming to Budapest I had only three European gold, but 10 from the Worlds. World Championships is a different program: the medals are given in Technical events as well. So you can win 7 of them during one competition.

How do you see your future life?

I'll swim till 2012.

Can you imagine yourself swimming four years more, till the 2016 Games?

Why not? But at a moment I'm not even thinking about it.



By Elena VAITSEKHOVSKAIA
FINA Press Commission Member, former Olympic Champion diver, Russia

OPEN WATER



Predicti☺ Open water



GER	4	1	1
RUS	2	3	1
ITA	1	1	3
GRE	0	1	1
GBR	0	1	0
BEL	0	0	1

Pay☺ Open water



1. ITA	2	4	2	8
2. GRE	1	1	2	4
3. RUS	1	0	2	3
4. GER	1	1	1	3
5. NED	1	0	0	1
UKR	1	0	0	1
7. FRA	0	1	1	2

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

A 2, a 3 ... and a 1:
Luca Ferretti (ITA) took gold
in the 5km at Lake Balaton



From the swimming pool to open water and back again

Perhaps there have never been so many athletes who have competed at European Championships both in the open water and the 50m pool. Britain's David Davies had previously shown the way. He won bronze medals at both the Athens Olympics in 2004 and, one year later, at the World Championships in Montreal over 1500m freestyle in the 50m-pool. He then took silver at the 2008 Beijing Games on the Olympic debut of the 10-kilometre distance. An increasing number of pool swimmers have since followed his example. "The switch was worth it, it is quite simply different swimming in open water, the conditions are completely different," said Greece's Marianna Lymperta after her bronze medal in the 5-kilometre time-trial race at the European Championships in Balatonfüred. Along with her compatriot Kalliopi Araouzou, who surprisingly took silver, she managed to swim her way to the podium.

Two years earlier teammate Spyridon Gianniotis had claimed the title at the first time trial ever held over that distance at the Europeans in Dubrovnik. "This time-trial race accommodates the basic speed, which we bring from the 50m-pool," is how Jan Wolfgangen (Germany) describes the benefits. He won silver in Dubrovnik, but then swam to gold in the 1500m freestyle at the European Short Course Championships in Istanbul at the end of 2009. "My big goal is the 2012 Olympic open water competition in London," he announced. He finished sixth in Balatonfüred.

"I have opted for a new challenge," is how Kvetoslav Svoboda (Czech Republic) described the reason for his switch from the pool to open water. He won silver at the 2002 Short Course World Championships in Moscow, over 400m freestyle. "Maybe I can qualify for the Olympics again," said the Czech. Ukrainians Igor Chervinskiy and Igor Sniitko, and their former compatriot



(who has since switched to Azerbaijan) Sergey Fesenko are further examples of those who have already received plaudits over the short and long course. The same goes for 5-kilometre European Champion Ekaterina Seliverstova (Russia), Giorgia Consiglio (Italy), silver medallist over 10 kilometres, the fourth-placed swimmer in the same event Aurelie Muller (France), or Teja Zupan (Slovenia), who competed in Hungary both on Lake Balaton and in the 50m pool on Margaret Island, Budapest.

Italy managed quite well without any athletes, who move between the

two "worlds". And it was by far the most successful nation at Lake Balaton. Two titles, four silvers and two bronze medals was the yield. The only time the Italians failed to win any medals in open water swimming was at the European Championships debut of the events in 1989, in Stari Grad in the former Yugoslavia. After the 2006 World Championships in their home city of Naples, systematic screening of talent was introduced in Italy. The first results of this were apparent in Hungary. Moreover, training methods were improved and several altitude training camps are held each year. Other winners at the European Championships in Balatonfüred included the Greeks, with a total of four medals.

These include a gold medal in the 5-kilometre team event, held as a time trial. The discovery among the Greeks was Kalliopi Araouzou, who swam to silver in the 5 kilometres in her very first year in open water. She acquired the same colour in the 1,500m freestyle at the World Junior Championships in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2008. And she also played a decisive part in the Greeks' victory in the team event. "She set the tempo and always more than held her own," says Spyridon Gianniotis by way of an accolade. Theoretically the team from the capital city of Athens thereby scored a start-to-finish victory, since they were the first team to compete in the race and nobody went faster. In the end Italy trailed by 52.6 seconds and, in turn, finished just 4.1 seconds ahead of the Russians.

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Germany met its own targets with three medals - one of each colour. But they wouldn't have had any objections to going home with a little more than just one gold over 10 kilometres, through Thomas Lurz, and a bronze from Angela Maurer over the same distance, as well as her silver over 25 kilometres. Great Britain, with the 2009 World Champion Kerry-Anne Payne (who didn't compete at Lake Balaton), Olympic bronze medallist Cassandra Patten and Beijing silver medallist David Davies, were focussing on the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in October.



Open Water reports and interviews by Hans-Peter SICK freelance swim-sport journalist, Germany





The winners

5km

	1. FERRETTI Luca ITA 58:43.4
	2. ERCOLI Simone ITA 59:00.5
	3. GIANNIOTIS S. GRE 59:15.9
	3. RUFFINI Simone ITA 59:15.9

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Lurz (GER)	▼ 5.
2. Giannotis (GRE)	▼ 3.
3. Ferretti (ITA)	▲ 1.

10km

	1. LURZ Thomas GER 1:54:22.5
	2. CLERI Valerio ITA 1:54:24.8
	3. DRATTSEV Evgeny RUS 1:54:26.6

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Lurz (GER)	● 1.
2. Davies (GBR)	▼ 30.
3. Giannotis (GRE)	▼ 7.

25km

	1. CLERI Valerio ITA 5:16:38.3
	2. VENTURI Bertrand FRA 5:16:54.7
	3. HEDEL Joanes FRA 5:18:57.6

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Cleri (ITA)	● 1.
2. Dyatchin (RUS)	DNS
3. Rickermann (BEL)	DNS

Lurz completes the hat-trick

Almost all roads to the title went through Italy. Only Thomas Lurz (Germany), with his third successive triumph over 10 kilometres, was able to overcome the "Squadra Azzuri". Otherwise the gold medals at Lake Balaton went to Luca Ferretti (5 kilometres) and Valerio Cleri (25 kilometres). But then the Italians also managed a historic victory. Never in the history of the European Open Water Swimming Championships have all three medals been won by the same nation in one race. Simone ERCOLI and Simone Ruffini picked up silver and bronze behind Luca Ferretti. When the winner, who was the last of the 34 starters to take to the water, reached the finish, there were scarcely any limits to the rejoicing among the large Italian delegation. Wild celebrations awaited the trio.

The fact that Simone Ruffini had to share his bronze medal with defending champion Spyridon Giannotis (Greece) made no difference. "A big day for Italy," said Luca Ferretti, celebrating his first ever European Championships medal. "I was able to swim my own race, without feeling the elbows of my rivals on me," Simone ERCOLI, who had already claimed bronze over this distance at the 2006 European Championships at Balatonalmadi on Lake Balaton, also declared his satisfaction. "Racing in a time trial is a good thing," added Simone Ruffini. No wonder, when you can pick up all three medals.

World Champion Thomas Lurz was unable to recover from the previous day's race over 10 kilometres. "My batteries were empty today," admitted "Mr. Open Water," who finished fifth. Just over two weeks earlier he had won his sixth successive World title over this distance in Roberval, Canada. With three other titles over the Olympic 10



kilometres he is the most successful open water swimmer of all time.

At the start of the competitions on Lake Balaton he had completed the hat-trick in the 10-kilometre race. For the third time, following on from 2006 and two years later in Dubrovnik, the event was won by Thomas Lurz. World champion Valerio Cleri (Italy) missed out on gold, finishing 2.3 seconds behind the German. World champion silver medallist Evgeny Drattsev (Russia) also had to admit defeat, training by 4.1 seconds.

"I was still hoping to pass Thomas Lurz in the last few metres before the finish, but he blocked my path. Quite simply he is an old fox, who is not easy to beat," Valerio Cleri said, congratulating the German who now has a total of four European titles. The same fate

befell Evgeny Drattsev. "Thomas Lurz and Valerio Cleri left me no chance to overtake them, which was very clever of them both," said the Russian, who was World Champion over this distance in 2007 and 2008, but has never yet managed to win gold at a European Championships. "When we went into the last kilometre, I was certain that I could win a medal"; said Thomas Lurz, who took the initiative 500 metres before the finish and gave yet another tactical master class.

The "King" of Lake Balaton and Lac Saint-Jean however was Valerio Cleri. Within 21 days he fished two gold medals and two silvers from the lakes of Hungary and Canada. "A pretty good yield for 70 kilometres of competitive swimming," he said in delight after his victory over 25 kilometres at Balaton-

PHOTO: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

fured, which meant a repeat his success of 2008. He also won silver over this distance at the World Championships in Canada.

After what was a rather cautious race for a long time he took the initiative at the start of the final lap, along with Bertrand Venturi. "When it came down to the last 200 metres, he charged up his turbo and I could no longer follow," said the Frenchman, who was eventually beaten by 16.4 seconds, and managed to swim onto the podium for the first time. Third place was taken by his compatriot Joanes Hedel, who had previously won silver in Dubrovnik.

As a result Valerio Cleri acquired his ticket to next year's World Championships in Shanghai, based on one of the internal qualification criteria for the

Thirsty work: Valerio Cleri (ITA) takes in liquid on his way through liquid to gold over 25km

Italians (as did Thomas Lurz for Germany) over 10 kilometres. "This is the first stage on the road to the London Olympics," both of them were relieved first of all not to be forced to undergo any further qualification stress. The Games in the British capital should signify the pinnacle and conclusion to a long and successful career for this duo.

Whereas the young generation is already waiting in the wings for Italy, the situation doesn't look quite so rosy for the Germans. Overall the Italians were the outstanding team among the men, winning five medals in three competitions. While the "Equipe Tricolore" claimed precious metal twice, Germany (one gold) and Russia (one bronze) would happily have fished more medals out of Lake Balaton. Only Greece would have been satisfied with one bronze.



Thomas Lurz

“Valerio Cleri is the best at the moment”

With nine World Champion titles and four victories in the European Championships, Thomas Lurz (Germany) is the most successful open water swimmer in the world. He won at the Olympic 10-kilometre distance at the Europeans on Lake Balaton and has so far always competed for medals over 5 and 10 kilometres.

All your achievements have been over 5 and 10 kilometres, have you ever thought about swimming 25 kilometres?

In fact I once considered competing over 25 kilometres at a World or European Championships. But more as a form of training under extreme stress. I think I would be able to hold my own. However, I lack experience, as I've never swum this distance before. But in the long run I don't want to include it in my competitive program.

If you were to encounter your 10-kilometre rival Valerio Cleri in Italy, could you beat him?

This is really difficult at the moment. He is currently one of the best open water swimmers in the world and in Europe, perhaps even the best - at least over 25 kilometres.

He has a strong team around him, where does the Italians' dominance at these European Championships come from?

They have always had a lot of good open water swimmers. Moreover, they have done good preparatory in this discipline in Italy, sometimes with the pool swimmers. For example Samuel Pizzetti is one of the fastest Italians over 5 kilometres - in the pool. A time trial race would be almost ideal for him, but he doesn't want to swim in the sea any more. Waves are also a problem for him. Moreover, Italy always has three participants in every event here on Lake



Balaton. The only other country to do this is Russia.

How do things look with the young generation in Europe?

Europe is certainly the world leader in open water swimming. Italy and Russia are quite simply the leading nations, and they practise this sport very professionally and have a very large support team. Then comes Germany, and Greece has closed the gap.

How can we attract even more attention to this sport?

One lap of almost 5 kilometres, far away from the waterside, is certainly not so attractive, the circuits should therefore be shorter and spectators should see more of the race, not just the start and finish.

What do you think of the team event?

Basically a good idea, but everything depends on the woman in each race. She sets the tempo. Perhaps we should move over to four participants - two men and two women. You could also arrange for some kind of swimming relay over a circuit of 2.5 kilometres. We definitely have an interesting sport, but a few small details should be changed, to make it even more attractive. And a rest day wouldn't be a bad idea either. Three successive days' racing drains your strength.

Photo: REUTERS / WOLFGANG RATTAY

Has open water swimming changed in recent years?

In any case it's definitely not as easy as it was at the start for someone new to come along and win right away. We now know who the best open water swimmers are. You don't just need physical fitness, but also a lot of experience. First of all, for example, you have to learn what it's like to swim in high waves.

There is now only one medal missing from your extensive collection of 21 medals: Olympic gold. How do things look in this respect?

The Games in London are my big target. I would swap any medal from the World or European Championships immediately for a gold medal.

What are your plans before then?

I'll compete in a few more World Cup races in September and October and then the World Championships are being held in Shanghai next summer, which I have already qualified for within the internal German qualification procedure, through my victory over 10 kilometres at Lake Balaton. This means I have a year to prepare for Shanghai, especially as places for the Olympics will be awarded there.

“The swimming pool was too short for me”

Linsy Heister

Linsy Heister (Netherlands) brought off her first big coup on the international stage at the World Championships in Roberval: finishing as World Champion over 25 kilometres. The 22-year old teacher training student's second coup followed at the Europeans in Balatonfüred - gold over the Olympic distance of ten kilometres.

Two titles in just a few weeks, what is the secret, which enabled you to swim at the front this year?

This is quite simple. I've done an awful lot of hard training, and eat properly and swim between 60 and 110 kilometres a week. In addition we have a very professional team of coaches, doctors, physiotherapists and support staff around us in the Netherlands, who encourage athletes on our way to the top. Moreover, I underwent altitude training in Sierra Nevada, Spain, for the first time in April this year.

In Marcel Wouda you have a coach, who was himself a World and European Champion, though in the pool. What's he like as a coach?

He is a very, very good coach with great experience from his own time as an active swimmer. I benefit from his great experience. He really knows what the right training program is at the right time.

Do you train with pool swimmers at PSV Eindhoven, or only with open water athletes?

My training group includes European Short Course Champion Hinkelien Schreuder and butterfly specialist Joeri Verlinden. Marleen Veldhuis, Ranomi Kromowidjojo and Inge Dekker on the other hand train with Jacco Verhaeren.

Is there any difference in training between pool and open water swimmers?

Yes, definitely. We do more kilometres, and swim longer sequences with shorter intervals.

The Netherlands has some very successful open water swimmers, with Maarten van der Weijden as Olympic Champion in Beijing in 2008, or multiple World and European Champion Edith van Dyck. Do they represent a role model for you through a long tradition in open water swimming in the Netherlands?

I really don't like being compared with other successful athletes. You have to swim your race on your own and every race is different. It is difficult to make comparisons. But it's true, we have a long tradition in this sport, which I might be able to continue.

How did you get into open water? Given that there are not very many opportunities to swim Open Water in the Netherlands.

The pool has always been a little too short for me. Quite simply, I can swim better in open water. We train in the pool most of the time, but I often have to get out into the fresh air. Obviously most of the water in the Netherlands is frequently too cold. As a result we also compete abroad a lot. For example I want to enter the FINA World Cup in September.

Which kind of water do you prefer? Lake or sea?

I prefer lakes, since the water doesn't taste as salty.

What are your next targets?

Naturally the 2012 Olympic Games in London are the next big goal for me. I definitely want to be there. But before then the World Championships in Shanghai are scheduled for next July, which also represents an initial qualification event for the Olympics. I'd really like to qualify for London there, to allow me to train in a targeted way for the 12 months until then, without having to swim any further qualification events.

But there will be a hell of a strong field in Shanghai and it won't be easy to make the top ten there. I have also interrupted my studies at the moment, allowing for optimal preparations for these two objectives.



Were you still thinking about your race at the World Championships in Roberval during your races on Lake Balaton?

Yes, it went through my head. It gave me an awful lot of self-confidence and might have been decisive in the victory over 10 kilometres.

To what extent do so many races in such a short time take their toll?

Unlike the 5-kilometre swimmers, I had two days' break between the 10 and 25 kilometres at the European Championships. But even these two days are really too short to fully recover.



Photo: REUTERS / BALINT MEGGYESI

The winners

5km

-  1. SELIVERSTOVA Ekaterina RUS 1:02:34.7
-  2. ARAOUZOU Kalliopi GRE 1:02:37.3
-  3. LYMPERTA Marianna GRE 1:02:41.3

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Ilchenko (RUS)	DNS
2. Seliverstova (RUS)	▲ 1.
3. Kamrau-C. (GER)	DNS

10km

-  1. HEISTER Linsy NED 2:01:06.7
-  2. CONSIGLIO Giorgia ITA 2:01:07.6
-  3. MAURER Angela GER 2:01:08.2

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Ilchenko (RUS)	▼ 20.
2. Maurer (GER)	● 2.
3. Grimaldi (ITA)	▼ 9.

25km

-  1. BERESNYEVA Olga UKR 5:48:10.2
-  2. MAURER Angela GER 5:48:10.3
-  3. GRIMALDI Martina ITA 5:48:30.8

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Maurer (GER)	▼ 2.
2. Uvarova (RUS)	▼ 7.
3. Vitale (ITA)	▼ 13.

Beresnyeva swims to sensational gold

A new "Queen" of Open Water Swimming emerged from Lake Balaton. Maybe nobody had bargained with Olga Beresnyeva from Ukraine winning a medal. Not even her. And yet she touched the finishing line first over 25 kilometres, ahead of Angela Maurer. The two of them were separated by a tenth of a second. Linsy Heister took the crown over the Olympic distance of 10 kilometres at the European Championships, following her first World Championship victory over 25 kilometres. Ekaterina Seliverstova (Russia) won the 5 kilometres, as she had in the 2006 European Championships in Balatonalmadi, located some 20 kilometres away from the current venue.

There was no other race on Lake Balaton in which the difference between gold and silver was as close as the women's 25 kilometres. A photo finish was also required to decide on the bronze medal: in favour of Martina Grimaldi (Italy), who was fractions of a second ahead of defending champion Margarita Dominguez (Spain). Never in the history of the European Open Water Championships for women had there been just a tenth of a second between first and second. But this was not the only special feature of this race - it was also Olga Beresnyeva's first ever appearance at this distance. "I can hardly believe that I surprised everyone, including myself and all the experts," said the winner in celebration. At the same time it was Ukraine's first medal at the European Open Water Swimming Championships.

Linsy Heister came to Hungary with the recommendation of a victory in the 25 kilometres at the World Championships. The 22-year old Netherlands' swimmer from PSV Eindhoven could not believe her victory at first. "I'm not certain before it becomes official," was how she fended off the initial congratulations. "During the closing sprint I kept thinking somebody must be coming, but nobody else came," and the victory in Roberval had given her a lot of self-confidence for the European Championships. Giorgia Consiglio (Italy) also underlined her two second places at the Worlds in Roberval with a silver at the Europeans. "I can't complain, it was a really good season," she said. Bronze went to Angela Maurer, making her the only female competitor to claim two medals in the individual events.

Kalliopi Araouzou and Marianna Lyperta staged a jig of delight, which



Grand entrance: Olga Beresnyeva of Ukraine won the 25km title in her first major race over the distance

Team winners

1. Greece	59:03.0
2. Italy	59:55.6
3. Russia	59:59.5

EXPECTATIONS	PAYOFF
1. Germany	▼ 4.
2. Italy	● 2.
3. Russia	● 3.

they hardly wanted to end, following their sensational medals over 5 kilometres. When the two Greek girls realised the silver and bronze were secure, they flung their arms around each other's necks and celebrated for several minutes. The Greeks had never managed to finish in the first eight at a European Championships. However, at least since the World Championships in Roberval, the name of Kalliopi Araouzou should have been one to note at least. The student, aged just 19, took seventh place there, making her the third best Euro-

pean in her first season in open water. Her compatriot, who is 12 years older, had already more than held her own on many occasions in the World Cup, but had never yet won a medal.

Ekaterina Seliverstova succeeded defending champion Rachele Bruni (Italy), who finished ninth. The European Champion was forced to wait nervously for a while at the end, before the gold medal could be hung around her neck, with an advantage of 2.6 seconds. Her team colleague Larisa Ilchenko was much less fortunate than

the defending champion over 10 kilometres. The Olympic Champion and, with eight World Championship titles, the women's success story in open water swimming finished in a disappointing 20th place. She had suffered back problems after last year's World Championships in Ostia, followed by a race in cold water at this year's Championships in Roberval. "Things didn't go optimally for her, but I'm convinced that she will be back to top form again next year," said Russia's Swimming President Vladimir Salnikov.



From the Headquarters

Photo: REUTERS / LASZLO BALOGH



The season's premium water polo event, the LEN European Championships in Zagreb, got underway after the LEN Magazine had gone to print. The host Croatians and the players of title-holder Montenegro clashed in the preliminaries (just as in the World Championships last year - see picture) and both teams were regarded as favourites for the crown. More on this event in our next issue!

On June 3rd and 4th LEN Director Laszlo Szakadati had an important meeting in Paris with Havas Sports (EDF Marketing Agency) concerning the 2010 European Short Course Swimming Championships and sponsorship issues. Immediately after (June 5th and 6th), our Director was at the first leg of the Mare Nostrum competitions in Monte Carlo where he was witness to an interesting event, with good races, and a nice attendance.

The funeral services for our departed friend Alan Clarkson took place at the beautiful gothic cathedral of York Minster on June 9th. LEN President Nory Kruchten, General Secretary Sven Folvik, Director Laszlo Szakadati were present in Alan's city of birth to accompany his family and offer our personal condolences and those of the LEN Family for the loss of our cherished colleague.

LEN President Nory Kruchten was invited and had the opportunity to attend the 2nd edition of the Swimming Championships of the Small States of Europe held in Reykjavik (ISL) from June 12th to 13th. LEN thank the Icelandic Swimming Association for the invitation and the chance to experience the well-organised competition and a hospitality the LEN Family will all enjoy at the LEN Congress in May of 2011.

The second leg of the 2010 European Open Water Swimming Cup was again swum in Italy, and on the same date as last year, June 13th. The men's and women's 10 km races were held in San Felice Circeo with many participants and top-ranked swimmers among them. The Italian Swimming Federation again confirms its constant presence in the 13 editions of the European OWS Cup and fundamental support for the long-distance discipline.

A new meeting took place in Paris on June 23rd and 24th with LEN and its Marketing Agency Community, and a potential sponsor/supplier for European Aquatics.

The Portuguese Swimming Federation celebrated its 80th Anniversary in a commemorative ceremony conceived to honour national swimmers, coaches, referees and federation officials for the long history of dedication to Aquatics, and the LEN Director and I were there in representation of LEN on the Troia Peninsula overlooking Setubal where a FINA 10km Marathon Swimming World Cup event was held the next day. Congratulations to our friends at the Portuguese Federation and to President Paulo Frischknecht.

The 4th annual Open EDF de Natation at La Croix Catelan in Paris offered a chance to meet with representatives of EDF and to clarify with them certain aspects of the collaborative agreement that was blocking a final conclusion to the

long-awaited allocation of the 2010 European Short Course Championships. Afterwards LEN announced that the 14th edition of the European Short Course Swimming Championships will be organised by the Royal Dutch Swimming Federation in the City of Eindhoven from November 25th to 28th in the same swimming pool that saw such excellent races in March of 2008. It will surely be a memorable event worthy of the high level these Championships and these Organisers have us accustomed to.

The end of June brought the LEN President and LEN Director to Rome for a meeting with the European Olympic Committees organisation and eight other Continental Sports Federations to discuss the European Youth Olympic Festival and related matters.

The Junior category swimmers, divers, and synchronised swimmers had their European Championships in Finland from July 7th to 18th. These young athletes delivered wonderful results that indicate the good work being done in so many different parts of Europe and the brilliant future they all point at. LEN President Nory Kruchten attended the beginning of the diving competition and officially opened the Championships. LEN General Secretary Sven Folvik was present for the last diving events and first races in the swimming pool, and the LEN Director was in Helsinki to see the last weekend of swimming. All three of them were very impressed with how the triple LEN Event was handled and felt that this was definitely one of the best editions of

the European Junior Championships ever. LEN thank the Finnish Swimming Association, and Rolf Mikkola, Chairman of the Organising Committee, and his team for the excellent job.

LEN Director was in Rome to conclude the final administrative and financial issues pending with regard to our previous headquarters in the Eternal City. The years of LEN's home in Rome are now behind us, but will not be forgotten.

LEN Financial Consultant Hans Gerrits Jans was in LEN Office in Luxembourg giving the finishing touches to LEN's financial records of 2009, discussing new policies and procedures to apply to make it all more efficient, and to meet with pro-

fessional audit firms who could potentially assume auditing responsibilities.

On July 17th, the third leg of the 2010 European Open Water Swimming Cup took us to Turkey where Open Water Swimming activity continues to develop with, among other events, LEN Cup Legs and Cup Finals in the last few years. The organisers welcomed the Cup participants to Kocaeli and the event ran smoothly and successfully.

Great Water Polo was to be seen in Oradea at the 2010 FINA World Cup where the LEN Director Laszlo Szakadati was happy to pay a visit to his home town and see the exciting games on site.

From July 29th to August 1st the young women of our aquatic team discipline battled it out in the Ukrainian city of Dneprodzerzhinsk for the title of European Junior Champion. The final was the Junior version of the 2008 Senior final in Malaga, with Russia again defeating Spain, and both teams showing that their older age categories will soon be reinforced by a strong new group of players.

In a two-day OWS multi-event in Hoorn, the Royal Dutch Swimming Federation and Ter Rede van Hoorn organised the European Junior Open Water Swimming Championships and the European OWS Cup leg number 4 and last for this year. More about the August 1st Cup competition in next month's newsletter. Concerning the Junior Championships, the British team took the two individual 5km titles home and accumulated enough points to win the Championships Trophy. The conditions for racing were not easy at all on Saturday, July 31st, but these brave young swimmers apply themselves with the admirable drive that pushes them beyond their limits despite the occasionally very rough situations in the open waters. We thank the organisers for delivering these LEN Events to our complete satisfaction.

Events	2010	2011
European Championships (SW, DIV, SYS, OWS)	Budapest (HUN) 4 • 15 August	
European WP Championships	Zagreb (CRO) 29 August • 11 September	
European WP Championships, Qualification Tournaments, Men&Women	Istanbul, Athens, Oradea (m) Imperia, Eindhoven (w) 30 April • 2 May	
European SC SW Championships	Eindhoven (NED) 25 • 28 November	Szczecin (POL) 8 • 11 December
Arena DIV European Championships		Turin (ITA) 8 • 13 March
European SYS Champions Cup		Sheffield (GBR) 20 • 22 May
European OWS Championships		Eilat (ISR) 5 • 11 September
WP Euro League "Final Four"	Naples (ITA) 14 • 15 May	TBD
European OWS Cup Legs	Eilat (ISR) 10 May, Circeo (ITA) 13 June Kocaeli (TUR) 17 July,	28 • 29 May TBD
European OWS Cup Final Event	Hoorn (NED) 31 July	TBD
European Masters Championships (SW, DIV, SYS, OWS)		Yalta (UKR) 5 • 10 September
European Masters WP Championships		Hamburg (GER) 4 • 9 July
European Junior SW Championships	Helsinki (FIN) 14 • 18 July	Belgrade (SRB) 6 • 10 July
European Junior DIV Championships	Helsinki (FIN) 9 • 13 July	Belgrade (SRB) 29 June • 3 July
European Junior OWS Championships	Hoorn (NED) 31 July	Bids requested
European Junior SYS Championships	Tampere (FIN) 7 • 11 July	Belgrade (SRB) 29 June • 3 July
European U19 WP Chmps. Men		
European U19 WP Chmps. Women		
European Junior WP Chmps. Men	Stuttgart (GER) 8 • 15 August	Rijeka (CRO) 4 • 11 September
European Junior WP Chmps. Women	Dneprodzerzhinsk (UKR) 25 July • 1 August	Madrid (ESP) 21 • 28 August
LEN Congress	Limassol (CYP) 29 May	Reykjavik (ISL) 13 • 15 May

Federations considering to host a LEN Event where this applies (see "Bids requested") please contact the LEN Office in Luxembourg.



by Laszlo SZAKADATI
LEN Director



The European Swimming Federation has 51 member countries. The LEN Magazine opened this Forum for its entire Family and while news keeps pouring in from the majority of our federations and swimming sports journalists, little is heard from some of our Members. Please note that we welcome your exciting news and important developments in all swimming disciplines, at any time of the year.

Albania

On a national level, on July 6-7 the Albanian Swimming Youth Championship was held in Durres. The same city also organised the Albanian National Cup on August 25-26. On an international level, between June 19-20 we took part in the COMEN Cup, in Catania, Italy, with a team of four swimmers (two girls and two boys). Our swimmer Mario Sulki entered the European Championship in Budapest, Hungary in the 50m and 100m freestyle events. Also, we are making efforts to take part in the FINA Aquatics Convention to be held in Uruguay in September.

(By Julian Bregu, LEN Magazine correspondent)

Andorra

Two young swimmers, Monica Abella Ramirez and Oriol Rodriguez Cunat took part in the fifth Youth Olympic Games in Singapore and they both managed to proceed at least once from their respective heats and compete in the semi-finals.

Armenia

The country sent one young diver, Gevorg Papoyan, to Singapore for the first Youth Olympic Games: he is one of the five European athletes able to take part in the 3m synchro event after a successful qualification campaign.

Austria

We are very proud that we had an enormous starting field at our national masters in all classes this summer. At the other end of the spectrum, it is great to see that the work with young talent at the different regional associations comes to fruition. We have a good and strong basis thanks to our coaches who do a wonderful job. This year, the traditional Ströck Austrian Qualifying Meeting takes place in Wr. Neustadt (12-14 November 2010), as the Wr. Stadthalle is still closed owing to renovation works.

(By Julia Wiltschko, LEN Magazine correspondent)

Azerbaijan

LEN has excluded two Azerbaijani swimmers, Andrey Ilin and Yevgeniy Lazuka, from the European Swimming Championships in Budapest with immediate effect due to the fact that they competed in international events representing Belarus less than twelve months ago, this being in contravention of FINA General Rule 2.6 in cases of changes of affiliation from one national governing body to another. 21-year-old Lazuka finished 14th in a time of 24.28sec in the 50m fly in Budapest. This result will be annulled. He had also entered the 100m fly. Ilin was to compete in the 50m and 100m freestyle.

Belarus

Aliaksandra Herasimenia (BLR) claimed the European 50m backstroke crown and championship record in 27.64 in Budapest this August, five years after returning from a steroid doping ban. She also got a silver medal in the 100m free and was placed 5th in the 50m freestyle.



Belgium

Jasper Aarents and Ward Bauwens were the heroes of the national squad at the junior European Championships in Helsinki. Aarents finished third behind Frenchmen Yannick Agnel and Mehdy Metella in the 400m free and second in the 50m free, while Bauwens earned a silver medal in the 1,500m and a bronze in the 800m free.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Four Bosnian swimmers participated at the 30th LEN European Swimming Championships: Nenad Simic, Hajder Ensar, Ducid Arnel and Benjamin Buca. Hajder Ensar was the most successful: he broke four Bosnia and Herzegovina records (100m freestyle, 200m medley, 400m medley, 50m butterfly).

(From: Monika Duvnjak, LEN Magazine correspondent)

Aliaksandra Herasimenia of Belarus: what a comeback!

Bulgaria

The top Bulgarian swimmer Peter Stoychev won the Swimming Marathon World Cup for the 32km swim in Roberval, Canada. Stoychev swam the stretch in 6:40:22h, leaving Canadian Simon Tobin second at 6:43:37h and Argentinian Damian Blau third, on 7:07:35. "It is a hard race with great competition so I am very happy to win," said Stoychev. He extended warm thanks for the support of the Bulgarian community in Canada. On July 19, Maria Zlatkova of Bulgaria won the trans-Bosphorus race. The Bulgarian swimmer covered the distance of 6.5 km in 44.52mins. Her sister Sofia was second (46.24 minutes). The race took place under the auspices of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee.

(Focus News Agency)

Croatia

Zagreb was ready to welcome the best European water polo teams for the European Championships at the beginning of September. The Croatian national team entered as one of the favourites after reaching the final of the World Cup in August. Sandro Sukno was the top scorer of this event, with 17 goals.

Cyprus

Rania Pavlou represented the country in the junior European Championships in Helsinki where she had modest results in the 50m and in the 100m free respectively. Two other swimmers, Anne Schegoleva and Omiros Zagkas raced at the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore.

Czech Republic

Czech swimmers finished equal 20th in the race for the LEN Championships Trophy at the European Championships in Budapest: the female swimmers produced the better results, earning 56 of the 66 team points gained.

Denmark

Amalie Emma Thomsen brought a silver medal back home from Helsinki: she was second in the 400m free event at the European Junior Championships. Daniel Skaaning also won a medal: a bronze in the 200m free.

Estonia

Making good use of having the event in the neighbourhood, Estonia arrived to Helsinki with 15 young swimmers for the European Junior Championships who competed in almost all events including the relays. One semi-final berth marked the development of the sport in the Baltic country.

Faroe Islands

The organisers of the 30th European Championships prepared the national anthem of the Faroe Islands (downloaded from youtube) in case Pal

Joensen should win a title. At last, the talented young distance swimmer saw his national flag raised as he finished second in the 1,500m free – and winning the very first European medal for his country in the history of the championships. His prize was also the biggest in his country's sporting history, while the Government of the Faroes has pledged support to build a 50m pool, so far lacking on the islands.

Finland

The cities of Helsinki and Tampere hosted the European Junior Championships in synchro, diving and swimming in July. The organizing Finnish Swimming Association wishes to thank all of the participating teams for creating such a magnificent and inspiring atmosphere. Competitions were also successful for the host team. Finland achieved the first EJC diving medal since year 2000 by Heikki Mäkipallio. In swimming, Jenna Laukkanen returned Finland to the podium winning silver and bronze in two of the longest breaststroke distances. Last time when EJC swimming medal ended up in Finland was in 2004.

(By Jussi Salminen, Editor in Chief, Uinti)

France

After having excelled at the EDF Swimming Open (26-27 June), 18-year-old Yannick Agnel from Nice obtained his baccalaureate of Sciences with honours. Certainly, one can very well distinguish oneself in sport without cutting classes. Agnel never stops surprising his coach, Fabrice Pellerin. After the convincing French Championships in Saint-Raphaël and a sensational EDF Open, the 18-year-old from Nice performed extraordinarily well at the junior Europeans, namely in 400m freestyle (title and national record). "What can I say... It was a competition that I was curious to see him take part in. He hadn't really done this event before in this season, at least not with the same commitment that he managed to put into the 200m or even the 100m. Yannick had got around the event," commented Fabrice Pellerin radiantly.

According to Denis Auguin, coaching Alain Bernard at the CN Antibes, the disappearance of full-body suits as of 1 January 2010 has not rocked the hierarchy of the world sprint. "After more than six months without the full-body suits, it seems to me that the hierarchy of the sprinters has not changed. Eamon Sullivan was struggling at the Mare Nostrum, but he swam 48.50 at the Australian Championships. As for the others, they are all working along different training strategies." The coach (from Antibes) did not hesitate to cite the Canadian Brent Hayden, an anti-tech-suits man who suffered a setback on the world rankings in 2008 and 2009, as one of his favourites for the London OG.

In July, Coralie Balmy ventured into the world of fashion for the sake of a photo session for designer Stéphanie Césaire. Their work had its roots in the spirit of Martinique, which they are both natives of. The two young women wanted to seal their partnership in the framework of a joined project, a photo session of some emblematic bags of the Maison Césaire.

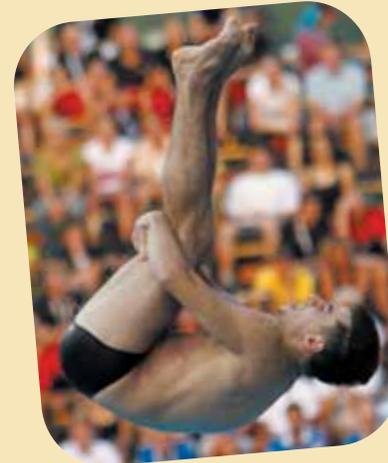
(By Adrien Cadot, Natation Magazine)

Georgia

In Budapest at the European Championships, Chola Chanturia, 21, made his international debut: he entered the final in the 3m springboard and was placed 9th. He also took part in the FINA Diving Grand prix in Italy and Spain in June and July and was placed 6th and 4th with teenager Shota Korakhashvili. We hope they will be able to achieve bigger successes in future.

(By Irakli Bartaia General Secretary)

Photo: REUTERS / BALINT MEGGYESI



Chola Chanturia of Georgia competes in the men's 3m Springboard diving final

Germany

Deutsche Sporthilfe offers bonuses worth a total of 107 250 Euros for the 30 athletes who managed to either win a medal or achieve a top 6 place at the European Championships in Budapest: 4,500 Euros were awarded for gold, 3,000 for silver and 2,400 for bronze. "The premiums for the great successes of the German athletes should help and encourage them during their preparations for the World Championships in Shanghai and for the London Olympics, where they will face tough international challenges from the competitors of the United States, China and Australia," said Dr. Michael Ilgner, Chairman of the Deutsche Sporthilfe foundation.

Singapore 2010: Europe is the best!

As usual, swimming was one of the main attractions of the first Youth Olympic Games in Singapore. And just like in Rome, at the World Championships last year, Europe has proved again that it is the dominant force of the swimming world. China topped the medal table but if we compare the continents the European swimmers led the parade with 16 titles and 49 medals altogether. Among the European nations Hungary was the best with 4 gold medals followed by France and Ukraine (3-3 each), Russia won two titles while Italy and Croatia also earned one each. Sixteen European countries managed to have at least one podium-finish, which is also a great accomplishment!



MEDAL TABLES, CONTINENTS

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Europe	14	16	19
Asia	12	4	3
Oceania	4	6	6
Americas	4	4	5
Africa	1	3	2

Gibraltar

Our top swimmers are training hard for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.
(By Denise Reyes, President)

Great Britain

Former world open water champion, Keri-Anne Payne and David Carry have pencilled in September 2012 as the provisional date of their wedding following a highly traditional proposal by the Commonwealth 400m freestyle champion. The romantic Scot popped the question literally minutes after returning to Stockport following the Scottish nationals in Glasgow. "We hadn't seen each other for a week and as soon as he walked in the door I knew there was something up with him," said Keri-Anne. "There was lots of lovey-dovey stuff and then he got down on one knee and said: "Will you marry me?" "I said: "Of course!" Then I cried. They were tears of joy." Asked what she would be known as following their marriage, the bride-to-be said it would definitely not be Keri Carry – nor Keri-Anne Payne-Carry or Keri-Anne Carry-Payne. "I will insist on people using both parts of my first name – so it will be Keri-Anne Carry," she said. David and Keri-Anne, whose relationship dates back five years, are one of two Anglo-Scottish couples in the British team. Liam Tancock and Caitlin McClatchey also have a long-standing romantic attachment.

(By Peter Hassall, Editor, Swimming Times)

Greece

After a set-back at senior level age-group players gave Greece something to cheer about: the junior team clinched the silver medal at the European Champion-

ships held in Stuttgart. Greece defeated Hungary 11-2 in the quarters (amazing...) and Croatia in the semis before losing to Italy in the final, which was decided by a penalty shootout.

Hungary

The Ministry of Human Resources – supervising sport – led by Miklos Rethelyi offered a reception of the medal-winner swimmers and their coaches after the highly successful European Championships. Representatives of the major sponsors of the federation – Allianz, T-Mobile, Pappas Auto, ELMÜ, MVM, Vízűvek, Suzuki – were also invited to the occasion.

After Brazil withdrew from the World Cup in Christchurch (New Zealand), the national water polo federation accepted the invitation of FINA and quickly organised the trip of the women team to the event. "This team needs experience and the meet of the best eight teams of the world offers a unique opportunity to gain some" – said head coach Matyas Petrovics.

Iceland

A six-member strong team took part in the Singapore Youth Olympic Games: they all came up with brave performances and Bryndis Run Hansen even managed to clinch a semi-final berth in the 50m butterfly.

Ireland

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Irish Water Polo Association the following Executive Committee was elected: President: Robert Nolan, Chairman: Geoff Massey, Honorary Secretary: Stephen O'Brien, Honorary Treasurer: Declan Finlay. Fixtures Secretary: Cara Mulcahy, Director of

Referees: Denver Kirk. All correspondences should either be e mailed to the Secretary at: stephen.obrien@santos.ie or posted to the same at: 68 St. Declan's Road, Marino, Dublin 3, Ireland.

(By: Stephen O'Brien, Operations Manager)

Israel

History was made at the Junior European Championship. Yakov-Yan Toumarkin won the 100m backstroke, 0.16sec away from László Cseh's record for Hungary, while his teammate David Gamburg finished in 3rd place giving the Israeli team a swim to be proud of. The Israeli National Championship took place at the Wingate Institute between 21-25.7.10. It was a great championship that ended with 11 new Israeli junior records.

Italy

After long years of waiting Italy can celebrate an international gold medal in men's water polo again. The national team won the Junior European Championships in Stuttgart after defeating Serbia in the semi-finals and Greece in the final. The Italians trailed by two before the last quarter but they managed to come back and won the title in the penalty shoot-out.

Latvia

The 50m freestyle events brought success for the Latvian swimmers at the Junior European Championships: Gabriela Nikitina and Pavel Gribovskis managed to reach the finals of this event respectively.

Liechtenstein

Besides an athlete in judo, two swimmers, Julia Hassler and Simon Beck represented the small country in the first Youth Olympic Games in Singapore. Julia was chosen to be the flagbearer for the opening ceremony.

Lithuania

Following tradition, a team from neighbouring Belarus also took part in the Lithuanian water polo championship. The Championship consisted of two tours with the participation of three teams from Lithuania and one from Belarus, being held for the first time in the city Elektrenai, situated midway between the major cities of Vilnius and Kaunas. After a tight competition, finally Vilnius "Baltic Amadeus" became the winner of the Championship for the sixth time in nine years, second was the team from Minsk, third – Alytus, fourth – Elektrenai. All the participants were happy with the tournament conditions in Elektrenai, which is important because water polo games were organised for the first time in this nice 50 metres pool and it represented a main preparation for organising the youth water polo Nordic European championship which will be

held in November this year. Another good thing is that we managed to obtain considerable support from the municipality to develop water polo in this city.

The Lithuanian water polo federation invites all national youth teams from the Nordic European countries to take part in the Youth Water polo Nordic European championship in Elektrenai. Next year, the Lithuanian Water Polo federation plans to organize a big international tournament to celebrate its 80th anniversary (having been established in 1931).

(By Viktoras Tonkich President, Lithuanian Swimming Federation)

Luxembourg

Raphaël Stacchiotti achieved a brilliant performance at the Junior European Championships in Helsinki. The Luxembourgish swimmer from Ettelbruck managed to keep his European title in the 200m medley. After setting the best time in the first round and the semi, he kept his composure and won in 2:02.52, a national record: "I really wanted to feel it again. On the podium, I looked down lane 4 and sang the national anthem", said the winner. Stacchiotti, who specially prepared himself for the championships, managing to grab another medal. This time, it was silver,



Raphael Stacchiotti of Luxembourg prepares to compete in the men's 50m freestyle swimming

in the 400m medley. After setting a national record in the morning (4:25.43), he improved tremendously, improving his own mark by more than 4 seconds. Indeed, he managed to swim in 4:21.28, which is among the 20 best

times in the world half-way through 2010. "For a mini-Team, it's not that bad", said Ingolf Bender, national coach. "Five finals, two national records, one title and two medals, what can you expect more?", he asked. In addition to Raphaël Stacchiotti there was also young backstroke specialist Sarah Rolko, who reached two finals and finished 7th in the 100m.

(By Romain Haas, LEN Magazine correspondent)

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🇲🇰 Macedonia

Macedonia sent six swimmers to the Junior European Championships in Helsinki and three swimmers to the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore – the federation used its funds in support of the young swimmers in favour of sending anyone to the senior continental showcase in Budapest.

🇲🇹 Malta

Improving the water polo skills of teenage water polo players combined with learning and practising the English language is the latest initiative to provide a comprehensive water polo education for these youngsters whose provenance is from eight different countries. The mastermind behind the programme is the Hungarian ace player Rajmund Fodor, who performed with great impact in 2008 and 2009 seasons in Malta. This former Olympic and World Champion organised a water polo camp on the island (June 21 to August 29, 2010) that focussed on the traditional Hungarian water polo culture with the help of other Hungarian coaches. There is also an English language tutor who is providing the academic background. Hungarian presence in Maltese water polo at present is conspicuous, with no fewer than nine players militating in the Mediterranean island's national league. Among these are the well-known Tamas Molnar, Tamas Varga (both Olympic champions) and Marton Toth.

(By Alex Vella, LEN Magazine correspondent)

🇲🇩 Moldova

Facing very difficult conditions, the Swimming Federation of the Republic of Moldova has managed to train two athletes to participate in the first Youth Olympic Games in Singapore: Julia Tanasienko, who placed 13th in 50m breaststroke and Sergey Golban, who finished 14th in 100m backstroke. We look forward to any support offered from international organisations to keep our sport and our Federation in the Republic of Moldova alive.

(By Alexander Tudose, Secretary General)

🇲🇰 Monaco

At the European Junior Diving Championships 2010 held in Helsinki, Pauline Ducruet finished 19th in the 1m springboard, while in the 3m springboard, she was ranked 22nd. It was her third participation in this competition. She also entered the Youth Olympics in Singapore with her teammate Amelie Trinquier (swimming).

(By Georges Kiehl, LEN Magazine correspondent)

🇲🇳 Montenegro

Though the national team lost the final to Serbia in the World League with a penalty shootout, the silver medal means the Montenegro qualified for next year's World Championships in Shanghai.

🇳🇱 Netherlands

On Thursday August 12, 2010, Pieter van den Hoogenband was appointed Chairman of the Organising Committee of the European Short-Course Swimming Championships in Eindhoven, taking place from Thursday November 25 to Sunday November 28, 2010, in the Pieter van den Hoogenband Swimming Stadium. As Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Pieter van den Hoogenband will be the first point of contact for the European Swimming Federation (LEN) and he stands at the head of the organization of the 2010 European Championships. He will make use of his extensive experience and knowledge of swimming to maintain contact with sponsors and (inter)national swimmers. After his professional swimming career, Van den Hoogenband was named Tournament Director of the Swim Cup Eindhoven in 2009.

(By Marielle Disselhoff, LEN Magazine correspondent)

🇳🇴 Norway

The country's only swimmer taking part in the Youth Olympic Games came back with a medal from Singapore: Lavrans Solli grabbed the bronze medal in the 100m back. At senior level, Alex Dale Oen, the first man from our country to win a European swimming title, successfully defended his 100m breaststroke crown in Budapest.

Norway's posterboy in swimming: Alexander Dale Oen, the best breaststroker in the 100m event



Photo: REUTERS / LASZYLO BALOGH

🇵🇱 Poland

Twenty four talented Polish swimmers took part in the Junior European Championships in Helsinki: 17 boys and 7 girls – they collected five medals (1-2-2) which put the country on the 11th place in the medal table.

🇵🇹 Portugal

Ana Rodrigues earned the country's first medal at the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore after finishing 3rd in the 50m breaststroke.

🇷🇴 Romania

Romanian Water Polo Federation, with the support of Oradea Town Hall, organised the 14th FINA Men's Water Polo World Cup between July 27 and August 1. After finishing fifth, the national team qualified for the FINA World Swimming Championships in Shanghai 2011. Between 30-31 July in Oradea we also staged the meeting of FINA TWPC Committee. FINA President Dr. Julio C. Maglione was also present in Oradea for a few days and participated in the victory ceremony.

(By Radu Diaconescu, International relations)

🇷🇺 Russia

The fourth edition of Vladimir Salnikov's Cup in swimming will be held in St-Petersbourg as always. 50 foreign and 250 Russian swimmers accepted the invitation of the four-time Olympic champion who is the President of the Federation of Swimming of Russia. The tournament will take place on the eve of the New Year on the December 28-29. Vladimir Salnikov's Cup, which has even witnessed world records, is a new type



Another two... After winning the World Championship title, the Serbians (pictured: Filip Filipovic) marched on in 2010: they bagged the gold medals in the World League and in the World Cup

Photo: REUTERS / STEFANO RELLANDINI

of competition, with a show beyond that in the water included. The solid prize fund, the enthusiastic supporters and a sellout on tickets is guaranteed.

(From Nikolai Dolgopopolov, LEN Magazine correspondent)

🇮🇹 San Marino

Swimmers entered only Italian events in Piacenza, Rome, Imola and Catania and did not take part in either continental championships or the Youth Olympic Games.

🇷🇸 Serbia

Water polo achieved great successes in Serbia: the national team won the World League in the town of Niš in Serbia and the FINA Cup in Oradea, Romania. The new pool in Smederevo means a big step forward in Serbian swimming: it is an outdoor pool with 6,500 seats. Serbian water polo heroes took part in the opening ceremony in Smederevo.

(By Dejan Stevovic, LEN Magazine correspondent)

🇸🇰 Slovakia

The domestic championships for men and women came to an end. The men's event was won by CH Hornets Kosice for the 3rd time in a row. Interestingly enough, out of the first four teams in the final ranking three were from Kosice. 1. CH Hornets Kosice, 2. Akademik Kosice, 3. Tozan Topolcany 4. SKP Kosice. As far as the women's championships is concerned, the dominance of the PVK Vrutky club is evident.

(By Stefan Bottlik, LEN Magazine correspondent)

🇸🇯 Slovenia

Some eminent swimmers were in Slovenia before the European Championships in Budapest, including Lotte Friis, 800m and 1,500m champion from Denmark, and male champions Pawel Korzeniowski (POL) and Evgeny

Lagunov (RUS). An interesting competition, the Slovenian Open national championship was held in the small town Ravne na Koroskem. All Slovenian swimmers were there (except Jernej Godec, who is in South Africa for charity and because of injury he could not travel to Budapest), including three from America: Damir Dugonjic, Sara Isakovic (both from Berkeley), Gregor Plevelj (SMU Dallas), as well as one of the best coaches of the world, Gennadi Touretsky (ex-coach of Alexander Popov) with the Swiss team. We saw interesting competition, some duels and a lot of young swimmers, such as Tjasa Oder, European junior champion.

(By Jolanda Bertole, TV SLO)

🇪🇸 Spain

Ivan Perez, one of the most talented centre-forwards of the world decided to quit the Spanish national team after the World Championships in Rome, 2009. At the age of 38 the Spanish player, born in Cuba, will play only in his club CN Barcelona. Ivan was world champion in Fukuoka 2001, bronze medallist at the World Championship in Melbourne in 2007 and silver medallist in Rome in 2009. He was present at two Olympic Games, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. In 2005, when Rafa Aguilar became the head coach of the Spanish team he changed a lot of players in a switch of generations. In this new era for the Spanish team, Ivan Perez is one of the most important players for Rafa Aguilar. He adapted very well to the changes and he acted as a guide for the younger players.

(By Carlota Bestit, LEN Magazine correspondent, Spain)

🇸🇪 Sweden

Therese Alshammar wrote history in Budapest. She won five medals, three individual and two in relay. Therese's international tally is 67 championship medals (Olympics, World Championships and European Championships,

long- and short-course): one more than the former record holder Martina Moravcova from Slovakia. It is 13 years since Alshammar won her first championship medal. "This is one of my best championships. I normally don't participate in three individual events and now a won a medal in all three. Beside that it is really fun that we succeeded in the relays. Our medley team can be very good in the future with so many young swimmers." Therese told to the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter.

(From Karin Hamberg, Swedish Swimming Federation)

🇨🇭 Switzerland

Two of the three Swiss swimmers at the Youth Olympic Games produced some good results: Yannick Kaeser and Danielle Villars both reached the final of the events they entered.

🇹🇷 Turkey

Ediz Yildirim wrote history in Helsinki, becoming the first European junior swimming champion for his country. Yildirim won the 800m free with ease after finishing third in the 1,500m.

🇺🇦 Ukraine

The Ukrainian Swimming Federation will host XIII European Masters Championships in Yalta, September 2011. We have set up our Organising Committee. The Championships web site with initial information could be reached at www.yaltamasters2011.org/. More information for participants will be available online in autumn. The Organising Committee is working on affordable and convenient flights and accommodation.

Thanks to FINA Development programs, Ukrainian Swimming Coaches will get an extra source to increase their level of professional education. FINA coaches' certification program is chosen as a base for new online tests. The first level of the "CoachTest" will be available in January 2011.

(By Gennadii Kliuchnyk, Executive Director of Ukrainian Swimming Federation)

The editorial board of LEN Magazine wishes to make this quarterly magazine a forum for the LEN Family where you can discuss ideas that promote the progress of swimming.

We will evaluate swimming events and promote the exchange of information. Our idea is that all LEN Member Federations be featured by covering their activities and event results.

LEN Magazine is a publication of the LEN Family. We welcome all observations, advice, opinions, news, information, photos at the following address: lenmagazine@lenmagazine.com



A Complicated Heritage

An interview with Stefano Morini, responsible of the Federal Centre of Verona.

You are the Coach of Federica Pellegrini and the Head Coach at the Elite Centre of the Italian Swimming Federation in Verona. What does this position mean to you now, after Castagnetti passed away?

It was the hardest thing that has ever happened to me. Over the past fifteen years Alberto and me worked side by side just like husband and wife. Both of us managed to adjust to each other's qualities and shortcomings. I am grateful to him for being more than a colleague, he was a friend, part of my family. We had our own disputes but we always managed to sort out the small misunderstandings. We slept in the same room. We shared pleasant and unpleasant moments as well. Rome '94 was a disaster. We don't really know the reasons. The team was probably old, they were reaching the end of their term. The new generation started to show up at the horizon in 1995 with Brembilla and Rosolino and a new set of medals was on its way starting with the European Championships in Seville 1997. Then followed a period of significant improvement which led up to the European Championships in Helsinki in 2000, where we won a lot, while the Sydney Olympics had placed Italy among the swimming superpowers of the world, with the gold medals of Fioravanti and Rosolino. One year later at the World Championships in Fukuoka we did have

reasons to be really satisfied. It was not so much the case with the World Championships in Barcelona in 2003 but we recovered quickly and the Athens Olympic Games saw us at our best. In recent years we put Alessio Boggiatto and Paolo Bossini into the limelight as well as Filippo Magnini and Federica Pellegrini who made their way to the top from the very start. After Beijing 2008 I left FIN for personal reasons and became technical director of an important club which is now in full blossoms, ISPRIA SwimPlanet.

You have started your work with the national team after the shiny suits era came to an end. Are there any changes compared to the past?

Nothing in terms of training methods. We were in a way used to train in those high-tech suits, but our 'number one' athletes have not really suffered because of their absence. Of course, records are made to be beaten but, judging by the number of records in the latest two seasons, we may still have to wait a few years. Now the focus is on the human factor and on training methods and not so much anymore on the technological aspect and on finding new materials for the suits. The primary advantage of the high-tech suits was not so much to assure a greater buoyancy – which, anyway, was there – but the compression of the muscles, which helped reducing fatigue, facilitating penetration in water and reducing the time needed from the muscles to fully recover from fatigue thanks to a faster elimination of lactic acid. This was particularly true for the bigger and more used muscles, as, for example, the femoral quadriceps.

And what about managing Federica Pellegrini?

Federica is a thoroughbred. A true professional in and out water. Training goes smoothly with her, she can manage both her private and entrepreneurial life. Federica has learned to manage her own image just like Rosolino, being helped by her agent, staff and family. Federica is quite gifted as an athlete, with an exceptional kinetic intelligence, an extraordinary ability to concentrate and she is a 100% professional. Now she has also become the team leader: she is open and no longer introvert and she can make herself heard by everyone. Her everyday training includes two training sessions, totalling 16-17 km a day. She goes to the gym every other day.

by Camillo Cametti



In all respects

Four years ago in Budapest, the French team was the shining star of the European championships bagging eighteen medals: fifteen in competitive swimming and three in open water, among them the title of Gilles Rondy on 25 km. What memories, what smiles, what moments of joy and happiness!

Since that record crop, French swimming has ascended to new heights. Some champions have retired, others have emerged, but all of them carry in themselves these successes, our victories, your triumphs.

Long gone are the times when France struggled to accumulate medals. Nowadays our athletes draw crowds, seduce the public and take impressive challenges. Over the past years, France has discovered in itself a passion for aquatic battles. It is enough to evoke the general craze incited by the third Night of the Water, the fourth EDF Swimming Open or the operation Learning to Swim organized for the third year this summer.



We are a great aquatic nation – and I am deeply convinced of it. Of course, not the greatest, let us be modest, but still. At the end of June, Michael Phelps and Cesar Cielo were there in Paris, and in a few days, French swimmers will challenge the emblematic continental swimmers in Budapest (Hungary).

In July, the national juniors splashed the European Championships of Helsinki (Finland) with their talent by sweeping in 17 medals of which 5 were titles. After them, it was the sea marathons who took part in the open

water world championships in Roberval (Canada). At the end of August, it will be the turn of our young hopes to fly out to Singapore where they will compete at the first Youth Olympic Games – not to mention our junior water polo players, men and women, taking part in their respective European championships in the month of August.

As you can see, this summer the entire French Swimming Federation is in motion again. There are so many victories to savour and so many athletes to encourage yet. Let us not look towards the past, but concentrate on the present, for tomorrow's successes are being founded today!

*by President Francis Luyce
President of the French Swimming Federation*



Two years to go – and now it's time to 'plan your Games'

The countdown to London 2012 passed its latest landmark with a series of high-profile events on Olympic sites – and a renewed blaze of national publicity.

But the underlying message to everyone who wishes to be involved in two years' time was: 'Plan your Games now!' The athletes, of course, are already halfway through their four-year training plans while most of the massive building projects are on time or even ahead of schedule.

But people who'd like to be involved as volunteers, ambassadors, spectators or even athlete sponsors should be taking the first steps about now. Those who leave it too long may find they have also left it too late.

LOCOG chair Seb Coe said: 'The venues are nearing completion and our plans are coming together. Now it's the public's turn.'

'How will you spend the summer of 2012? Whether it's buying a ticket, becoming a volunteer, being part of our education or culture programmes – there are hundreds of ways people can get involved. To ensure you don't miss out, start planning your Games now.'

Events marking 'two years to go' included a tour of the Olympic Park by volunteers, VIPs and 70 Visa Team 2012 athletes, who were able to step inside venues for the first time. They walked across the main spectator bridge, which adjoins the iconic Aquatics Centre and will be the 'front door' to the Olympic Park.

The pool is not yet ready to swim in but Olympic 10km medalist and former world champion Keri-Anne Payne was meeting and greeting the public at Panasonic's 2012 stall in Trafalgar Square.

We are not rivals. Our goal is the same: to make swimming more and more popular world-wide.

We are partners. Our partnership means that we introduce each other in our own magazine.

We are friends. Our idea is to generate interest in these national and international magazines and to encourage readers to subscribe to them.

Here is a selection of the most well known magazines and excerpts from their latest issues as an appetizer

Would the development of swimming be necessary in Poland? During the last twenty years since the communist system was destroyed the swimming infrastructure changed dramatically. In 1990 Poland was a country with two or three indoor 50m swimming pools. None of them was adequate enough to organize bigger competitions even at national level. At the start of the last decade of the 20th century Poland had about 30 registered swimming clubs while at the start of the second decade of the 21st century Poland will have several 50m swimming pools, among them at least three or four with a capacity of two-three thousand spectators and ready to host biggest international events. Information issued by the Polish Ministry of Sport indicates that there are over 1,300 commercial indoor pools of different sizes (25m and less). The number of swimming clubs increased to nearly 300 and the number of registered swimmers increased from 3,000 in 1990 to about 15,000 in 2009. Undoubtedly, all this shows a huge development in the swimming infrastructure that may contribute to a bigger popularity of swimming in Poland.

by Leszek Scisly



'It's a day to have some fun and get involved in the Olympics – and Panasonic have got the 3D stuff that they are going to be releasing soon,' she said.

'Our Team' scheme invites small and medium businesses to share in 2012

A new and innovative fundraising programme has been launched to help meet the £25m fundraising target set for Team 2012.

'Our Team 2012' is designed to provide smaller businesses across the UK with an opportunity to support high-performance Olympic and Paralympic sport in the build-up to London 2012.

It will also raise vital funds to help provide British athletes with the training and equipment they need to compete at the highest level. With a cost of less than £10,000 per annum for the two-year programme, the scheme is designed to be accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In return they will gain a 'catalogue of business benefits' as well as sharing in the excitement of the home Olympics.

The programme provides SMEs with opportunities for staff engagement as they join athletes on their journeys to 2012. It also offers access to hospitality events at prestigious venues, including the House of Lords, and tickets to major sporting events across the UK. SMEs will also enjoy networking opportunities in their own regions, seminars, insight and training.

Minister for Sport and Olympics Hugh Robertson described the scheme as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity for business to support athletes on their home turf.

'Sports funding has always come from a mixture of Exchequer, Lottery and private sources,' he said.

'As a government, we have committed substantial Exchequer and Lottery

funding for our elite athletes in the run up to 2012 - but it has never been more important, given the difficult economic situation we're in, to have business behind our athletes.

'Supporting the Olympics is not just something the big multi-nationals can do – it is within the reach of every small and medium business in the UK and I'd encourage as many as possible to get involved.'

For more details, visit www.team-2012.com/support/sme.



Successes in Turkey

While the best German open water swimmers were fighting for medals at the World Championships in Roberval (Canada), a young team was also competing at the European Cup in Kocaeli, Turkey.

Led by the experienced Andreas Waschburger (Saar Max Ritter club) and Isabell Donath (Erfurter SSC), another 12 members of the youth squad took part in the third stage of this year's European Cup. The youth squad included the six swimmers nominated for the European Junior Championships. The objective was to gain more experience against strong international competition in Turkey, by way of preparation for the European Junior Championships in Hoorn, Netherlands, at the beginning of August.



The 5-kilometre race in the Sea of Marmora was held under good outdoor conditions, only the stinging jellyfish and saltwater brought some unwelcome experiences to some athletes.

Andreas Waschburger managed a start-to-finish victory in a spirited race. The Mainz junior Manuel Belzer surprisingly touched home in third place behind the three-time Olympian Kvetoslav Sloboda from Czech Republic.

Hendrik Rijkens, Florian Dörries (ST Elmshorn) and Alexander Röhlung (Berlin) rounded off some very good men's results in places 5-7.

Eva Risztov from Hungary dominated among the women. Isabell Donath finished the race with a solid performance in third place, behind Spain's Marta Recio. The other participants in the European Junior Championships, Josephine Paschke (Berlin Swimming Club), Lena Stiefvater (SG Neukölln Berlin) and Taina Raezke (ST Elmshorn) gained valuable experience in 9th, 11th and 13th places.

By Bernd Berkhan



Latest on Pan Pacs

Europe may have put its 2010 long-course showcase behind it but the rest of the world is still to fire on all cylinders. Over in California, the Pan Pacific Championships got underway the week after Budapest waved goodbye to its continental visitors, while in October and Delhi many of those who raced either in Hungary (Britain) or at the Pan Pacs (Australia, Canada and South Africa included) will clash at the Commonwealth Games. And of that before Guangzhou hosts the Asian Games. For reports, analysis and pictures from the biggest international events of the year, get your copy of SwimNews Magazine.

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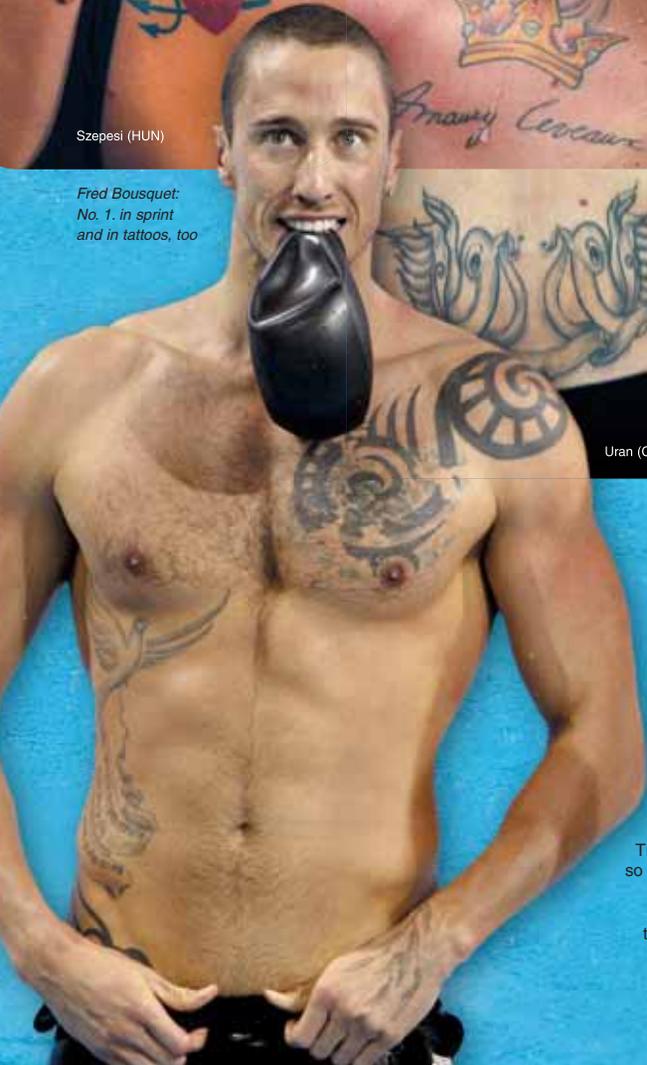
Szepesi (HUN)



Leveaux (FRA)



Lochte (USA)



*Fred Bousquet:
No. 1. in sprint
and in tattoos, too*



Uran (COL)



Meichtry (SUI)



Vari (HUN)

Photo: REUTERS

Stories on the skin

There is no way to hide it. Again. No more bodysuits – so all tattoos are visible to the public eye. (In swimming.

Water polo, diving – nothing special.) Targets (the Olympics). Memories (gold medals, and the name of the Olympic city) or something special. A message, a quote, a mark. All have their own story. Here are the pictures to tell them.

Selected when it counts

Competitor for Swimming and Water Polo

2010 Competitor Event Schedule

Euro League Water Polo Final Four, Naples
30th LEN European Championships, Budapest
European Water Polo Championships, Zagreb
XIII FINA World Masters Championships, Göteborg
XIX Commonwealth Games, Delhi
16th Asian Games, Guangzhou
European Short Course Swimming Championships
10th FINA World Championships, Dubai

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