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Windsor: Hosszú wins again, Japan excels

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Japan won one gold, one silver and five bronze medals on the fourth day of the World Swimming Championships (25m). Katinka Hosszú of Hungary won her fifth gold in Windsor.

In the first final of the fourth day of the Championships in Windsor (CAN), Russia managed to revalidate the title in the men's 4x50m free relay, touching for gold in 1:24.32 - the Europeans have the global mark in this event since Doha 2014 in 1:22.60. Competing with Aleksei Brianskii, Nikita Lobintsev, Aleksandr Popkov and Vladimir Morozov, the Russians were fourth with 50m to go, but a "turbo" last leg (20.71) from Morozov solved the situation in their favour. As in Doha 2014, USA earned silver in 1:24.47, with the fastest anchor leg of the field for Tom Shields in 20.58. Japan got the bronze in 1:24.51

In the women's 50m fly, Jeanette Ottesen (DEN), the second fastest of the semis, finally got the gold that she was chasing from 2010. On that edition of the Championships, in Dubai (UAE), she was third; then came another bronze in 2012 and a silver in 2014. In Windsor, the Danish star perfectly controlled operations and touched home in 24.92.

Ottesen is a successful athlete in this competition, with this victory being her 11th medal at FINA World Swimming Championships (25m). The minor medals went to Kelsi Worrell (USA, 25.27) and Rikako Ikee (JPN, 25.32).

One of the revelations at the 2015 FINA World Junior Swimming Championships, US Michael Andrew (17 years old), won the men's 100m IM final in 51.84, getting his first achievement at this level. World Record holder Vladimir Morozov, certainly feeling the tiring effect of the winning Russian relay some minutes before, finished in sixth (52.83), very distant of his global mark of 50.30.

The two Japanese representatives in the decisive race, Daiya Seto (52.01) and Shinri Shioura (52.17) completed the podium.

Owner of the 10 all-time best performances in this event, Katinka Hosszu (HUN) mastered the women's 100m IM final, getting a comfortable gold in 57.24. The Magyar great is the WR holder in this distance, after clocking 56.67 in December 2015. This victory represented her fifth title in Windsor and certainly confirms her status of FINA Best Female Swimmer of the Year. Moreover, it is the third consecutive victory of the Hungarian star in this event, after triumphing in 2012 (58.49) and 2014 (56.70). Emily Seebohm (AUS), bronze medallist two years ago, upgraded to silver (57.97) in Windsor, while Alia Atkinson (JAM) got the

bronze in 58.04.

After two Spanish victories in 2012 (Melanie Costa) and 2014 (Mireia Belmonte), USA recovered the crown in the women's 400m free. In Windsor, Leah Smith was in control from the beginning of the final, touching in the end for gold in 3:57.78. Her closest opponent during the race was Russia's Veronika Popova: her effort paid off and she got the silver in 3:58.90. The bronze went to Japan's Chihiro Igarashi in 3:59.41, while Katinka Hosszu was this time out of the podium, finishing fourth in 3:59.89. Sharon van Rouwendaal (NED), second in Doha 2014 and the 10km Olympic champion in Rio 2016, had to content with the seventh place, in a time of 4:03.69.

Surprise in the men's 50m free final, with favourite and fastest of the semis Vladimir Morozov (RUS, winner in 2012) losing the gold to an "unknown" Jesse Puts, from the Netherlands. The Russian looked in control of the race, but in the last 20m, Puts (22 years old), swimming in lane 7, made a final effort and touched for gold in 21.10, against Morozov's 21.14 for silver. The bronze went to Simonas Bilis, from Lithuania, in a time of 21.23 - it was the first-ever men's medal for the Baltic country in the history of the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m). For Puts, it was the second medal in Windsor, after getting the silver with his three teammates in the mixed 4x50m free relay - then, the Dutch sprinter had already been the fastest of the field in the first leg, clocking 21.27.

In the men's 50m backstroke, Junya Koga (JPN) confirmed his fast credentials from the semis and earned gold in 22.85, his first success at this level. His performance was however distant from the World and Championships record, established in Doha 2014 by Florent Manaudou (FRA) in 22.22. Jérémy Stravius, also from France, got the silver in Windsor (22.99), while Pavel Sankovich, from Belarus, earned the bronze in 23.03. It is the first gold medal for Japan in this event at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m). Robert Hurley, from Australia, winner in 2012, was only fifth this time, in 23.32.

In a thrilling eighth final of the day, the team of Russia brilliantly won the men's 4x200m free relay, in a time of 6:52.10. The Europeans recovered the crown they had lost since 2012 for the USA. In fact, the last two editions of the Championships had been won by the North Americans (6:51.40 four years ago, and 6:51.68 in Doha 2014), but this time in Canada, they had to content with the silver in 6:53.34. The bronze went to Japan, whose last swimmer touched the wall in 6:53.54. It was the seventh medal of the day for the Asian nation!

(Source: Pedro Adrega, Head of FINA Communications Department)