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Swimming: a strong and large American team coming to Hungary

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Qualification for the World Championships was open as long as possible for top American swimmers and the outcome is quite clear. In the course of the National Championships held from 27 June to 1 July in Indianapolis a total of 42 swimmers secured their places in the team travelling to Budapest. Almost 3 weeks before the swimming tournament in Budapest the nationals saw an abundance of excellent results and great battles.

The first name on this quite long list is Hali Flickinger, who qualified for the World Champs by touching in 2:07.60 and finishing first in women's 200m butterfly. Then came top stars including five-time Olympic and three-time world champion Nathan Adrian, who finished first in men's 100m freestyle in 47.96 beating the young swimmer Caeleb Dressel (47.97). This year these were the third and the fourth best times in this event so they both will race in Budapest. At the nationals it was also decided that Adrian's partners in men's 4x100m freestyle relay will be World Championships newcomers Dressel, Townley Haas and Zachary Apple.



Caeleb Dressel (Photo: USA Swimming)

The battle in 100m was repeated in the shortest and fastest event, however, the result was quite the opposite this time. Dressel (21.53) beat Adrian (21.87) by the third best time of this year, hence they will both enter the World Champs in July. In fact, this was the third world champion title of Caeleb Dressel in the one-week series after finishing first in 50 and 100m butterfly, and his fourth solo qualification. Will multiple events hinder him?

„If I focus all my attention to a specific event at a time, I am capable of putting all my energy into it. I guess this is the secret” - said Dressel, who is aiming at improving the last 25m in the time left until the World Championships kick off, adding that in the company of such excellent and fast swimmers it is not that hard to boost your performance. Townley Haas, relay member attending his first World Champs has demonstrated his skills in a solo event, 200m freestyle by sweeping the final in the the second best time of this year (1:45.03) and qualified for the World Championships. Haas admitted it was easier to swim knowing that he had already secured his place for summer.

Chase Kalisz set new personal best and number one time of this year (1:56.51) in men's 200m and 400m medley alike. Although Kalisz aimed for qualification only, after the tournament he said he could further improve his result in Budapest. Kevin Cordes swept men's breaststroke events including 50m, 100m and 200m with great results. In 100m he was second best (58.74), in 200m (2:07.41) and 50m (26.88) he was third best in the international field. As expected, Olympic champion Ryan Murphy excelled in 200m backstroke (1:54.30) and was runner-up to Matt Grevers (52.71) in 100m. *„I felt great when I saw number one next to my name, it doesn't often happen when racing with Ryan Murphy. It boosts my confidence now before the World Championships”* -Grevers said.

Concerning women, the swimmer of best performance currently, Katie Ledecky was the greatest star of the nationals and she did not disappoint the home crowd. She swept all three numbers, that is 200m (1:54.84), 400m (3:58.44) and 800m (8:11.50) freestyle with the best times of this year. In spite of this she told she hadn't set any specific goals concerning her results, she just wanted to do her best in all events while enjoying what she was doing. In her view long years of hard work and training brought about these achievements. The world record holder will enter 1500m as well, in Budapest, thanks to her time achieved already in this season, therefore in this course she did not race with fellow swimmers, among whom it was Leah Smith who touched in first. Her time of 16:01.02 is the second best this year, it goes without saying that it was Ledecky who could do better than that back in spring (15:35.65). For the record, Smith finished second in 200m, 400m and 800m, too, behind her great rival, so she qualified for the World Champs held in Budapest. She will enter 400m medley, as well, she won this event in 4:33.86.

Lilly King swept women's breaststroke events with outstanding results. Her time on 50m (29.66) was the best this year and new American record. „Setting a new American record is always great, yet I hope I can do a little bit better and reach for breaking the world record at the World Champs. When sprinting, you have no time to think, I swam as fast as I could” – said King, who finished first by the second best time of the world in 100m and 200m as well. Katie Meili was placed second in both shorter events and got her ticket to Budapest. King was very happy about it, since this way she will have an acquaintance to spend time with before the heats.

Men: Nathan Adrian (50 freestyle, 100 freestyle) Zach Apple (4x100 freestyle relay), Michael Chadwick (4x100 freestyle relay), Pace Clark (200 butterfly), Jack Conger (200 butterfly), Kevin Cordes (50 breaststroke, 100 breaststroke, 200 breaststroke), Abraham DeVine (200 medley), Caeleb Dressel (50 freestyle, 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 4x200 freestyle relay) Conor Dwyer (4x200 freestyle relay), Nic Fink (200 breaststroke), Robert Finke (1500 freestyle), Matt Grevers (50 backstroke, 100 backstroke) Zane Grothe (400 freestyle, 800 freestyle, 4x200 freestyle relay, Townley Haas (200 freestyle, 4x100 freestyle relay), Chase Kalisz (200 medley, 400 medley), Jay Litherland (400 medley), Cody Miller (50 breaststroke, 100 breaststroke), Ryan Murphy (100 backstroke, 200 backstroke), Jacob Pebley (200 backstroke), Tim Phillips (100 butterfly), Blake Pieroni (200 freestyle, 4x100 freestyle relay), Justin Ress (50 backstroke) Clark Smith (400 freestyle, 800 freestyle, 4x200 freestyle relay), True Sweetser (1500 freestyle)

Women: Kathleen Baker (50 backstroke, 100 backstroke, 200 backstroke), Elizabeth Beisel (400 medley), Mallory Comerford (100 freestyle, 4x200 freestyle relay), Madisyn Cox (200 medley), Hali Flickinger (200 fly), Bethany Galat (200 breaststroke), Sarah Gibson (100 butterfly), Lilly King (50 breaststroke, 100 breaststroke, 200 breaststroke) Katie Ledecky (200 freestyle, 400 freestyle, 800 freestyle, 1500 freestyle, 4x100 freestyle relay), Dakota Luther (200 butterfly), Simone Manuel (50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 4x200 freestyle relay), Melanie Margalis (4x200 freestyle relay), Katie Meili (50 breaststroke, 100 breaststroke), Lia Neal (4x100 freestyle relay), Leah Smith (200 freestyle, 400 freestyle, 800 freestyle, 1500 freestyle, 400 medley) Regan Smith (200 backstroke), Olivia Smoliga (100 backstroke, 4x100 freestyle relay), Hannah Stevens (50 backstroke), Kelsi Worrell (50 butterfly, 100 butterfly, 4x100 freestyle relay), Abbey Weitzeil (50 freestyle).