

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS SPECIAL EDITION

# SWIMMING WEEKLY

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**CAELEB DRESSEL  
BECOMES A  
SUPERSTAR**



**SIMONE MANUEL  
ON TOP ONCE AGAIN**



**THE REDEMPTION OF  
CHAD LE CLOS**

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# 2017 FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS PHOTO GALLERY

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USA

>>> KATIE LEDECKY



>>> LILLY KING



>>> KATIE MEILI

[ PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA ]



>>> CAELEB DRESSEL



[ PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA ]

>>> SARAH SJOSTROM

[ PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA ]



>>> CHAD LE CLOS



[ PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA ]

>>> KAYLEE ROCHELLE-McKEOWN & EMILY SEEBOHM



>>> CAMILLE LACOURT & MATT GREVERS



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>>> GREGORIO PALTRINIERI



[ PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA ]

>>> ELIZABETH BEISEL

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>>> CHASE KALISZ



[ PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA ]

>>> KATIE MEILI



»» CAELEB DRESSEL & NATHAN ADRIAN



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>>> ADAM PEATY



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>>> MIREIA BELMONTE



>>> RANOMI KROMOWIDJOJO



## THE NIGHT CAELEB DRESSEL BECAME A SUPERSTAR

BY DAVID RIEDER

Caeleb Dressel was hyped as the next great American sprinter. As for the hype, well, he earned it. But that's a lot to live up to, and plenty of talented teenagers—in all sports, not just swimming—have been viewed as disappointments because they have not turned out to be all that was promised.

Six World Championship gold medals later, Dressel sure has not disappointed.

The moment was in mid-December of 2013, in Greensboro, N.C., at USA Swimming's Short Course Junior Nationals. Dressel, representing the Bolles School at the time, was leading off a 200-yard free relay at the start of the first night of finals.

Dressel's time was 18.94. He had become the first high school-age swimmer to ever break 19 seconds. The packed house at the Greensboro Aquatic Center went nuts.

The meet was packed with talent and names that would go on to become stars in the future—including future U.S. Olympians Kathleen Baker, Gunnar Bentz, Townley Haas and Jay Litherland—but Dressel stole the show.

And then, right after that, Dressel stopped swimming.

"I wasn't even thinking about swimming during that time period," Dressel said. "During those six months, I didn't touch water. I didn't even think about touching water."

Would that really be it? Would someone that talented really call it quits at age 17?

No, he wouldn't. That summer water would call him back,

and he honored his commitment to go to the University of Florida and swim for head coach Gregg Troy.

### HERE COMES DRESSEL

Once he came back, Dressel's progression was rapid and constant. He won his first NCAA championship as a freshman at Florida and his first National Championship that summer. In the summer of 2016, he made his first U.S. Olympic team and ended up leading off the U.S. men's 400 free relay. The U.S. coaching staff picked Dressel to go first over a man very used to leading off those American relays, Michael Phelps. They needed every advantage possible, and it was already abundantly clear that the powerful Dressel had one of the best starts in the world. The decision certainly paid off, as the American men won gold.

During his junior season at Florida, he swept all three of his individual events at the NCAA championships and smashed the all-time fastest marks in both the 100-yard free and 100-yard fly. Even after U.S. Nationals, when Dressel won three events and finished a close second in the 100 free, there was barely any inkling this was possible.

Then came his first final of the World Championships, when Dressel led off the American men's 400 free relay. The U.S. team was in front as soon as Dressel went off the blocks and would never relinquish the lead.

Dressel ended up pulling away from the field and touching the wall in 47.26—yes, more than six tenths under his lifetime best and faster than David Walters' eight-year-old suit-aided American record of 47.33. The team ended up needing every bit of that effort as Nathan Adrian held off Brazil to win gold. Dressel's one slip-up came on day two, when he ended up fourth in a tight 50 fly final. On day three, he had a day off. Immediately after that, his legend was born.

He split a then-stunning 49.92 as the butterflyer on the American mixed 400 medley relay. The next day, he dominated the men's 100 free final, lowering his American record to 47.17 and winning gold by a massive seven tenths of a second.

Winning his first individual World title in that fashion? Extremely impressive—but apparently nothing compared to what he had up his sleeve for the next two days.

Dressel had qualified to swim the 50 free, 100 fly and the 800 free relay during the morning session on day six. But Troy decided that that would be a little too much, and the 800 free relay was out.

“I had to look a day ahead. That would have been three events last night and three events tonight,” Dressel said. “I would have liked to have been on it, but I think it would have been in the best interests of Team USA for me to not swim it.”

Just two events? Easy, apparently. He qualified second in the 50 free prelims and then returned to the pool and dropped a 50.08 in the 100 fly.

Yes, that was Dressel's best time by seven tenths of a second. Yes, it made him the third-fastest performer of all-time and the fastest man ever in a textile suit by three tenths. At that point, it was becoming so normal.

That night, he added an American record in the 50 free and took another hundredth off his 100 fly time. All in a day's work, right?

Day seven would throw another wrinkle his way—a triple. He would go for individual golds in both the 50 free and 100 fly, about 40 minutes apart, and then he would lead off the mixed 400 free relay.

No swimmer, man or woman, had ever won three gold medals in one session at a World Championships.

First came the 50 free. As per usual, Dressel was off the blocks and immediately in front. And once again, he won gold, his time of 21.15 another new American record, again the fastest time ever in a textile suit.

Forty minutes later, he returned to lane four inside the Danube Arena for the 100 fly final. Two lanes over was a familiar face: Dressel's high school training partner and Olympic gold medalist Joseph Schooling.

### THE RIVALRY

Schooling and Dressel have known each other for eight

years, since a 13-year-old Schooling moved to Jacksonville to train at Bolles. They had never considered themselves rivals, mostly because Dressel never considered himself a butterflyer.

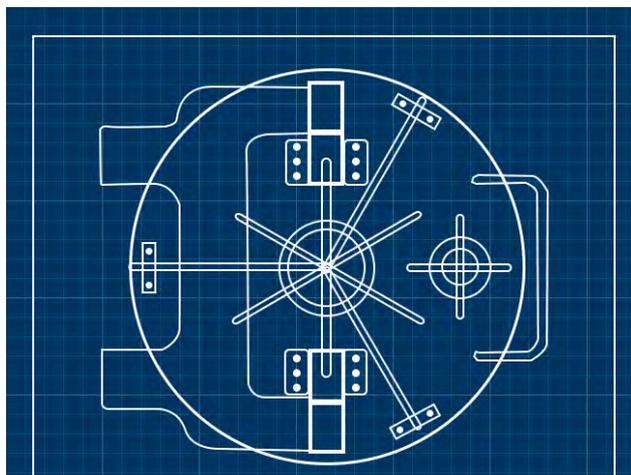
Then came the 2017 NCAA championships. Schooling was the Olympic gold medalist, the undisputed favorite in the 100-yard fly. But Dressel used a ridiculous final turn and a final 25 where he did not breathe to get the win.

They would meet again at Worlds. Schooling was the man hyped up as a potential threat to the world record. Well, at least until Dressel swam his 50.08 in prelims Friday morning.

Swimming two lanes apart in the final in Budapest, it was never any contest. Yet again, Dressel got ahead off the start and never looked back. He went out in 23.31 at the 50-meter mark, three tenths ahead of anyone else in the field. He came home in 26.55, again faster than anyone else in the field. He finished in 49.86. Schooling finished almost a full second back, tying for bronze in 50.83.

No one had broken 50 since full polyurethane suits were banned eight years ago, and here was Dressel, finishing just four hundredths shy of a world record held by a guy

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>>> DRESSEL AND HIS 2017 FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS SWIMMER OF THE MEET AWARD

named Phelps.

“That was phenomenal,” Schooling said. “There were no words to describe how fast that is. He just did 50 free, and he had a bunch of events before. That makes it even more impressive. That’s all, really.”

### TAKING HIS SHOT AT HISTORY

As Dressel jogged off the podium after receiving his 100 fly gold medal, he headed straight to the ready room to join Adrian, Mallory Comerford and Simone Manuel for the mixed 400 free relay. Dressel, unsurprisingly, was penciled into the lead-off position.

Even after his two finals, he still had something left. He split 47.22, just five hundredths off his time from the individual 100 free, and he handed Adrian a huge lead. The U.S. team would go on to win gold by more than two seconds and smash the world record by more than three.

History had been made—three gold medals in one night.

“I don’t think there’s any accidents in this sport,” Dressel said. “I’ve been scrutinized for the training I do at Florida. I had three swims within an hour and a half of each other tonight, and I had to be on my A-game for all of them. It wasn’t an accident what happened tonight. I work well with Troy, and we were ready for it.”

And so, to end the night, Dressel stood on the medal podium again and received his sixth gold medal of the week. Six, one short of seven—and with the 400 medley relay to go.

Only one man has ever won seven gold medals at a World Championships: Phelps. With the American men favored to take down the British and win gold in that relay, matching that accomplishment is well within reach.

“I have mixed relays helping me out, so I think it’s a bit different situation,” Dressel correctly pointed out. “I just want

to keep doing my own thing. I don’t want to be compared to Michael. I absolutely love Michael—that was my first time being on a team with him in Rio. He’s a great guy, love him to death. He texted me this meet just to say, ‘Great job.’”

True, the mixed relays, just added to the World Championships program in 2015, do give Dressel a leg up when it comes to accumulating gold medals. But it’s still massively impressive, and three individual golds is nothing to sneeze at, either. Katie Ledecky is the only other swimmer in Budapest who has won three individual golds. Among men, Sun Yang and Adam Peaty are the only others to win two.

But for all the gold medals, all the American records and all the world record scares, Dressel has had no time to let it sink in. Perhaps after the medley relay he’ll think about that, but with all the races he has had—so far, 15—there’s been no time to focus on anything but the next task.

“It’s physically challenging and emotionally straining. You can’t get too caught up in one race,” he said. “You have to take one race as time, enjoy the moment and then get re-focused really quickly.”

In his press conference at the end of the night, a reporter asked Dressel if he felt prepared to become the new face of swimming, at least on the men’s side, in this era after Phelps’ retirement. Dressel disagreed with that assessment.

“I don’t think that can be put just on me,” he said.

But there’s nothing Dressel can do to stop it—after this week, the spotlight will be his. On a night when Ledecky won her fifth gold medal of the World Championships and 14th world title of her career, hers was the side story. Perhaps Matt Grevers, the oldest member of the U.S. team in Budapest and a team captain, put it the best.

“It’s awesome seeing the birth of a superstar.” ◀

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>>> KATHLEEN BAKER, LILLY KING & KELSI WORRELL CONGRATULATE SIMONE MANUEL

# USA CAPS OFF HISTORIC FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH AN EXCLAMATION POINT

BY DAVID RIEDER



**S**ure, Adam Peaty made it interesting, giving the British men a four-hundredth lead over the Americans at the halfway point of the final event of the FINA World Championships, the men's 400 medley relay. But with Caeleb Dressel and Nathan Adrian closing it out, the result was never really in doubt.

As Adrian powered to the wall, British anchor Duncan Scott was more than a bodylength behind. Only fitting to close off a dominant week across the board in similarly dominating fashion. And when the dust cleared and the waves in the competition pool settled, the American totals were staggering.

The second-most medals any country won in the pool this week was 10. The American team, meanwhile, won 38 medals, the most all-time at a World Championships. Sure, mixed relays hadn't been around back when the Americans won 36 medals in both 1978 and 2007, but this team was perfectly happy to take all the chances it could get.

The 18 golds stand as the most any country has won at a major international meet since the Americans took home 20 from Melbourne a decade ago. 14 of those golds came in events contested at last year's Olympic Games. Second among teams in the gold category? Great Britain, with four.

Seven of the eight days of the meet saw Team USA win at least one gold medal, and on six of those days it was at least two. The one day that the Star-Spangled Banner did not play inside the Danube Arena was day two, and that was the day

Kelsi Worrell and Madisyn Cox each broke through to win their first individual medals at a major meet.

The U.S. team did all this without so many of the regulars that had topped podiums over the last several years: no Michael Phelps and no Ryan Lochte, no Missy Franklin and no Maya DiRado.

A plenty familiar face led the way on the women's side in Katie Ledecky. Even if she was not quite the same world record-crushing dynamo from the last Olympics in Rio and at the last World Championships in Kazan, five gold medals and one silver still made her the most decorated female at the meet.

"I've never walked away from a season completely satisfied, even last year. You always are looking and moving forward," Ledecky said. "If that was my bad year for the next four years, then the next couple years are going to be pretty exciting."

But at those Worlds in Kazan when Ledecky won five gold medals and set three world records, she was the lone bright spot for the U.S. team. Americans just won three other golds, with Lochte taking first in the men's 200 IM and two relays (mixed 400 free and men's 400 medley) topping the podium. That was it.

Ledecky had plenty more help this time, particularly from Lilly King, now an established star in sprint breaststroke, and from Simone Manuel, again a gold medalist in the 100 free.

King, no longer a teenager scorcher who went from relative

obscurity to Olympic gold in 12 months' time, has grown into a much larger role on the team. In Budapest, she was a part of four gold medals, including two in world record-time on day eight, and she has embraced that larger, more central role.

"I couldn't imagine a better finish to this meet. I did what I came here to do, and luckily I was able to finish this meet, which is something I've had trouble doing in the past, to get those two world records and get those two golds," she said.

"I wasn't the baby this year, and I'm used to being the baby in past years. But I love having that responsibility and knowing that my swims really count, and they're going to inspire other people to swim fast. I love it."

As for the men, they more than held their own. Dressel won seven gold medals—yes, seriously, and absolutely no one predicted he would be anywhere close to that gaudy total. Sure, the mixed relays helped, but no one could have seen that sort of sprint dominance coming.

His three-gold-medal effort Saturday night drew comparisons to a guy by the name of Phelps.

"Dangerous throwing around the name," Matt Grevers said Saturday night, referring to the 23-time Olympic gold

medalist, "but he's showing signs of just being incredible."

fter gold medal No. 7 as a part of the U.S. men's 400 medley relay, Dressel has shown more than just signs. He split 49.76 on that relay—even with a very sluggish 0.47 reaction time—and took the American squad from a virtual tie with Great Britain to a full second ahead.

Was Dressel's effort as awe-inspiring as Phelps' seven-gold-medal tally from Melbourne a decade ago? Not quite—Phelps broke four individual world records that week, including Ian Thorpe's world record in the 200 free. Dressel swam on four relays, including mixed relays, while Phelps had just two. But the 20-year-old Floridian undoubtedly deserves his place in history.

"I don't really know what to say," Dressel said. "I'm just happy to be done. I'm going to take a little break, go see some of my teammates in Europe and just enjoy myself. That's probably the most fun I've had within eight days. It was just a lot of fun in the atmosphere here. I had an absolute blast getting to do what I love to do."

Day eight of finals at the Duna Arena began just as day seven had ended—with two U.S. gold medals. King took down the world record in the women's 50 breast on her way to gold,

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with Katie Meili joining her on the podium with a bronze, before Chase Kalisz came out and dominated the men's 400 IM final.

It wasn't watching Kalisz win gold that was stunning—it was the fact that the typically strong-finishing Kalisz took over the lead at the 100-meter mark. He held the lead through the backstroke, typically his weakest stroke of the four. At that point, it became clear he was about to break into rare territory.

He finished in 4:05.90, winning by almost three seconds and becoming just the third man in history to crack the 4:06 barrier. The other two? Phelps and Lochte.

The women's and men's 400 medley relays would conclude the meet, and the U.S. had no peer in either of them. The women's squad of Kathleen Baker, King, Kelsi Worrell and Simone Manuel smashed a world record, finishing in 3:51.55.

Later that evening, the relay swimmers and team captains stepped on to the pool deck to accept the award for the top team of the meet—a shoo-in if there ever was one.

Elizabeth Beisel, a team captain and a member of the top U.S. international team each of the last 12 years, accepted the award, close to an hour after a swim in the women's 400 IM final that will most likely be her last at a World Championships.

The team had rallied around its four captains—Beisel, Meili, Grevers and Adrian—but Adrian insisted that it wasn't the captains who deserved the credit for the historic week.

"We don't take any responsibility for that," Adrian said. "This is an individual sport, but we come together as a team now. A lot of people were working really, really hard at home. I think it would be an over-statement for us to take credit for anybody else's success."

It's not just one thing that's working—it's a lot of things, at so many different training sites around the country. No, the World Championships may not be an Olympics, but what more satisfying way to go out for those using Budapest as a swansong? Think Beisel or USA Swimming National Team Director Frank Busch, who is preparing to retire next month.

"The team has been amazing, and I wouldn't want to go out on any other note than this one, having one of our best meets ever, one of the best teams I've ever been a part of. You can't really ask for more than that," Beisel said.

"I don't want to say this is a dream come true, but certainly,



considering the expectations coming in the year after the Games. I'm amazed at how well this has gone," Busch said. "The team atmosphere has been tremendous and great staff. The culture seems to keep rolling and rolling."

The entire American squad has continued to ride the momentum from the Rio Olympics, but, of course, there's a long way to go until Tokyo. That's when the results will count just a little bit more, when much more of the world will be paying attention.

Perhaps Kalisz put it the best after his 400 IM, after which he became the first swimmer since Lochte in 2011 to sweep the IM races at a World Championships.

"I think it's like a stepping point right now. I'm more focused for 2020—that's the pinnacle of our sport. World Championships are great, and I'm here to compete at my best, but the Olympics are the things that have been in my mind for my entire life," Kalisz said. "Every year is a step, and I think I took a step in the right direction for that."

It's not just Kalisz—the entire U.S. team took a massive step towards embracing this new era, one where Phelps won't be around to cover all the cracks and where Ledecy can't do it all herself.

The names and faces may change, but this era of U.S. dominance in swimming is showing no signs of abating. ◀

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## IN THE BIGGEST MOMENT, LILLY KING EMPHATICALLY DELIVERS

BY DAVID RIEDER

**Y**ulia Efimova was out for revenge, looking to turn the tables on Lilly King after King beat her for gold in the 100 breast final at the Olympic Games. But it was more than just what happened in the pool that had Efimova irked. King had called out Efimova for her checkered history with banned substances, and King had wagged her finger.

The rivalry, created out of nowhere the day before the 100 breast final, fueled King. It fried Efimova, who was caught on camera breaking down in tears in the days after the 100 breast final.

“The Olympics was the worst thing ever,” Efimova said.

But this year, as the two finally met again at the World Championships in Budapest, Efimova looked to have the upper hand. She came into the meet with the world’s top time of 1:04.84, faster than King swam on her way to Olympic gold.

And then, in the 100 breast semi-finals, she almost broke the world record. She touched in 1:04.36, one hundredth slower than the global standard Ruta Meilutyte set in 2013.

The gauntlet was laid. King appeared confident after her semi-final race—she qualified second for the final in a lifetime-best time of 1:04.53—but when she arrived at the Duna Arena for the final, the pressure hit. The time Efimova had put up in the semi-finals had King sweating.

“I was actually really freaking out when I got to the pool,” King said. “That race, it’s always going to be a showdown, and it’s always going to be an exciting one—especially after the time Yulia put up yesterday, which was very, very impressive. It was going to be a dogfight.”

That it would be. By the time she walked out behind lane five, she was composed, good to go. A pumped-up, highly-competitive race always brings out the best in King.

“That’s what I love about swimming,” King said. “I love having pressure and I love being competitive. That’s why I’m in the sport. I thrive off that. My favorite thing about swimming is walking out of the ready room to a crowd of screaming people.”

As she walked out to a packed house at the Duna Arena for the 100 breast final, King was ready to step up.

Meanwhile, for Efimova, things went off the rails immediately. Efimova got off to a terrible start and was instantly a half-bodylength behind Meilutyte on one side of her and King on the other.

The typically slow-starting Efimova was left scrambling to catch up. By the halfway mark, she was in second place, just a half-second behind King. But there wasn’t anything left in the tank, and King was pulling away.

King touched in 1:04.13. She had not just beaten Meilutyte’s record—she had demolished it. In a scene all too familiar to those who watched the 100 breast final one year earlier in Rio, King smashed the water before paddling away from a thoroughly-beaten Efimova to embrace her exuberant American teammate, Katie Meili.

With all the pressure on, King had again come through and delivered the best swim of her career, an effort she “absolutely” knew that she was capable of.

“I push 33-mids, 33-lows in practice, so I at least had a 34-low on the way home, so I knew that was in the tank,” she said.

Don’t be mistaken—this was the most pressure she has ever been under. No, a World Champs final is not an Olympic final, but before she swam in Rio, King was a rookie, the one chasing reigning World Champion Efimova. This time, the

target was on her back.

No, she wasn't the fastest seed or the fastest split, but she was the defending Olympic gold medalist. That won't change for another four years, and certainly the favorite status doesn't disappear after less than 12 months. And still, she delivered.

"It's amazing," Meili said. "1:04.1 speaks for itself, and it's just an honor to share the pool with her. She's an incredible breastroker, and it's amazing to see her get in and go faster every time she races."

"You all know what Lilly's capable of doing," Katie Ledecky said. "Her confidence is so impressive, and it's infectious for the whole team. She always delivers. We knew she could pull that out."

While King had put up the swim of her life, Efimova had cracked. The pressure was on her, too, perhaps more than ever before. And she faded down the stretch, her second 50 split of 34.71 more than a second slower than she had swum in the semi-finals. And that allowed Meili to sneak in and steal the silver.

King was pumped for her world record and gold medal, but her grin widened when she saw who had finished second. Meili had posted a time of 1:05.03, making her the sixth-fastest woman in history. Among those she passed on the all-time list: 2008 Olympic gold medalist and Australian legend Leisel Jones.

"I knew it was going to be an intense race, a showdown," Meili said. "I was just hoping to stay in my own lane, do the best I could. I told myself no matter the outcome, I was going to be proud of myself when I touched the wall, and I was just a little extra happy that I got a silver medal."

Meili is 26, six years older than King, and the two are nearly opposite personalities—King brash and out-spoken, Meili quiet and, according to King, "literally the nicest person I've ever met." While King has built up a rivalry with Efimova with her words as much as her swimming, Meili prefers to keep to herself, out of the spotlight.

But Meili has watched her younger teammate show poise in the biggest moments and has picked up a thing or two herself.

"What I don't have in dramatic flair and showmanship, I learn from her," Meili said. "I might not be the most confident, and certainly, though she's almost seven years younger than me, I'm learning from her every time I race her."

In some ways, Meili's performance may be just as notable or perhaps more impressive than King's. She's headed to law school at Georgetown this fall, and while she insists she is not retiring, her future in the sport is murky.

At an age when so few swimmers, particularly females, keep improving, Meili has bucked the odds, and if she doesn't swim at another World Championships or Olympics, that's not a bad way to go out.

But King insured that the spotlight would focus on her and Efimova on night three in Budapest. Really, that was guaranteed as soon as the drama of the Rio Olympic final had concluded.

"I love it. We get a lot of rivalries in other sports—football, basketball and sports like that. Swimming we see a lot of really nice people," King said. "That's great and all, but that's not my personality."

Even Efimova, at this point, has come to accept and embrace that rivalry—even if she would prefer that King speak to her before the two race each other.

"Why not? It's exactly what I need," she said. "It's so much more pressure, but it makes it fun and interesting to watch."

But at this point, it seems like a stretch to call King vs. Efimova a "rivalry." To fit that bill, each of the two parties has to win, at least occasionally, and Efimova has never beaten King in the 100 breast in a major championship meet.

Time after time, King has delivered in the biggest moments, but never quite like she did in Budapest. ◀

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## DÉJÀ VU FOR SIMONE MANUEL, ON TOP OF THE WORLD ONCE AGAIN

BY DAVID RIEDER

**W**hen Simone Manuel won her first Olympic gold medal, she could hardly believe that the digit “1” was next to her name on the scoreboard, and almost instantly, she was flooded by emotion.

One year later, when Manuel captured her first individual World title in the same 100 free, she was far more reserved—no tears this time. After sharing Olympic gold with Canada’s Penny Oleksiak in Rio, she got to stand on the podium by herself this time in Budapest.

This win, though, was just as improbable as the upset Manuel pulled off last year in Rio.

Sarah Sjostrom was not going to be beat in the women’s 100 free at the World Championships. No way—she’d been nipping away at the world record all year and had finally smashed it on the first night of the World Championships. Leading off the 400 free relay, she had punched the wall at 51.71, well under Cate Campbell’s previous world record of 52.06.

Five days later in the individual final, Sjostrom flipped first in 24.75, under her own world record pace. Manuel was in second, but she was a half-second behind.

Sound familiar? It should—last year in Rio, Campbell had just recently broken the world record, was in lane four for the final and was out ahead and under world record pace at the 50-meter mark, with Manuel was a half-second behind.

But with 25 meters to go in that race, Campbell was fading. At 15 meters, she completely lost her tempo. Manuel was

charging, and Oleksiak swooped in at the last minute, and the two women tied to pull off one of the Games’ most stunning upsets

The moment was Manuel’s long course breakthrough, her first individual medal as well as her first gold. After that, Manuel’s confidence soared, and the results in the year since have spoken for themselves.

Returning to Stanford for her sophomore year, she plowed through the NCAA season, winning two individual national titles and leading Stanford to the team’s first championship in 19 years. In the early part of the long course season, she consistently dropped time in the 53-second range, much faster than she swam even in the lead-up to the Olympic Games.

She had finished second behind Mallory Comerford in the 100 free at U.S. Nationals, but she still had earned her spot to swim the event at the World Championships, and more rest was to come.

A medal chance in the 100 free? Sure, most definitely. Gold? Not likely, not with the way Sjostrom had set the sprint world on fire through the first half of 2017 as her sprint free abilities suddenly matched her already-premier sprint butterfly.

But as she came down the home stretch in the 100 free, Manuel was not dropping off the pace—in fact, she was charging. With about 10 meters left, Sjostrom’s stroke tightened up, and she was fading. The collapse was not nearly as pronounced as Campbell’s at the Olympics, but all spunk in Sjostrom’s freestyle had vanished.

Manuel pounced on the opportunity. She snuck her fingertips in just ahead of Sjostrom's— 52.27 to 52.31.

Manuel was still a half-second off the time Sjostrom had put up leading off the relay, but it didn't matter. For a second straight year, she had a gold medal in her best event.

As fast as Sjostrom had been swimming race after race throughout the year, Manuel never believed that the 23-year-old Swede was unstoppable.

"I always think I have a shot," Manuel said. "I think that's the reason that's why I'm the swimmer that I am. I try to race, and I try to get my hand on the wall first. I just had confidence in the training I had done."

Sjostrom was devastated, in disbelief that she had blown all her steam too early in the race and wasted an opportunity to win a World title.

"It's so stupid to go out in 24.7. You shouldn't do that. No one can handle that," she said. "Four hundredths of a second is nothing. And they showed the race and I saw my finish. It was horrible. You don't deserve to win gold if you swim like that."

But to take nothing away from Manuel: 52.27 is a heck of a time. She now ranks as the fourth-fastest performer in history, trailing only Sjostrom, Campbell and Britta Steffen. She took back the American record from Comerford, who had broken Manuel's previous mark leading off the U.S. 400 free relay five days earlier.

She had won the first World title for the United States in the event since 1998, when Jenny Thompson won gold in Perth.

"I was two at the time," Manuel pointed out. "It's great to bring American sprinting back to the forefront, along with Mallory and the others we have behind us."

Make no mistake: Manuel has led the charge in returning sprinting to a position of great strength for the U.S. women, just 13 months after the Olympic team left Trials in Omaha, Neb., to the tune of major concerns about the state of the 50 and 100 free. Needless to say, those worries are long gone.

Now, Manuel continues to ride that wave of confidence, the one that she has been on since Rio, that she can beat anyone in the world when swimming head-to-head. Twice now, she has backed that up. ◀

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## CHAD LE CLOS FINDS REDEMPTION IN EMOTIONAL WORLD TITLE

BY DAVID RIEDER

**C**had Le Clos was 20 years old and in his first Olympic Games, his second Olympic final, when he took down a legend. That time, there were no tears, only joy.

Michael Phelps was bidding for a then-unprecedented third straight Olympic gold in the men's 200 fly, but Le Clos, with a monstrous final 50 and a well-timed touch, got in just ahead. Le Clos was exuberant as he stood on the podium, his goggles dangling around his neck.

When he won the World title in the same event five years later in Budapest, tears dripped from Le Clos' eyes as he stood on the podium—still wearing his goggles on his neck. After all that had happened in his life during the previous year, this one was special.

At the 2016 Olympics in Rio, Le Clos had set his mind on again upsetting Phelps in the 200 fly, and he made his intentions clear through a well-placed shadowboxing routine—carried out while standing directly in front of Phelps in the ready room.

Phelps wasn't having any of it. In the Olympic final, Phelps held the lead at the halfway point and refused to give it up, even as he faded badly down the stretch. Le Clos was clearly second with 25 meters to go, but he fell apart and ended up

missing the medals entirely.

Le Clos did leave Rio with two silver medals—he had come out of nowhere to get on the podium in the 200 free and also tied with Phelps and Laszlo Cseh for silver in the 100 fly—but the loss in his signature event was crushing.

“Losing last year was the lowest moment of my career,” he said. “I try to pretend like it wasn't, but I was in a very bad place last year. I tried to be strong, and I tried to lie to the media and say, ‘Ah, I'm good, I'm good,’ but I was down and out.”

At that juncture in his career, Le Clos could have opted to move his focus away from the 200 fly, to focus on the 100 fly and on the freestyles. But he vowed to return to the event where he first made a name for himself and make no excuses.

Going into 2017, Le Clos wanted nothing more than to get back his title as the best in the world in the 200 fly. Risks would be worth taking to pull that off, so Le Clos went out and gambled all he had.

Swimming from lane six in the World Championships final, Le Clos went all-out from the start. He was up by seven tenths at the first turn and more than a second by the halfway

point. His 100-meter split, in fact, was just three tenths off world record pace. Le Clos had laid his cards on the table, and now it was for someone to try to catch him.

One lane over, the man making a run at Le Clos had 12,000 screaming fans behind him. All Hungarian swimmers have received massive support at the World Championships, but few are more beloved than Cseh.

Cseh had been a force internationally since 2003, and at 31, he was going for a defense of his 2015 World title in the event. Cseh was coming hard, but Le Clos would not give in.

Le Clos swam over to Cseh, and the two friends embraced at the lane line. Le Clos held up Cseh's arm as the crowd serenaded him. Certainly, performing well in front of his home crowd meant a lot for Cseh, who has admitted that he's unsure of his future in the sport.

But the moment belonged to Le Clos—he had his redemption, and the raw emotions came out on the medal podium. He thought of his parents, both in attendance in Budapest after undergoing major cancer treatments during the past year.

Le Clos is an extrovert, and his antics at meets get him plenty of attention. In Rio, a few days after the shadowboxing



routine, he insisted that he, Phelps and Cseh all hold hands on the medal podium after they finished in a three-way tie for silver in the 100 fly.

But beneath that exterior over the past year has been a man deeply hurt because of what happened in Rio and because of the challenges life has thrown at him out of the pool with his parents' precarious health.

A World title in swimming typically carries slightly less weight than an Olympic gold medal, but not this time, not for Chad Le Clos, not after all that had happened over the previous 12 months. ◀



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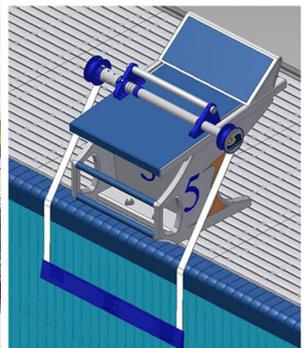


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&gt;&gt;&gt; FEDERICA PELLEGRINI &amp; KATIE LEDECKY

## FOR THE FIRST TIME, KATIE LEDECKY COMES UP SHORT

BY DAVID RIEDER

The prospects of Katie Ledecky not finishing first in the women's 200 free final were real, very real. During the first three days of the World Championships, Ledecky had insisted that she believed she was clicking, but her times had just not been up to her usual standard.

She had missed her world record in the 400 free by almost two seconds and was off her global standard in the 1500 free by six seconds—although she appeared to ease up in the mile when she realized how massive a lead she had built.

The biggest warning sign, though, was her split on the U.S. women's 400 free relay. Yes, she pulled the Americans into the lead, but that was despite a split of 53.83, more than a second slower than the 52.7 splits she had put up at the 2016 Olympics in Rio.

Oh, and while Ledecky had been a bit shy of her best, Emma McKeon had been flying. The 23-year-old Australian had already won silver in the 100 fly in a lifetime-best time of 56.18 and anchored the Aussie 400 free relay to silver with a career-best split of 52.29.

McKeon had won bronze in the 200 free at the Olympic Games and had put down a swift 1:54.99 in the semi-finals, good enough for the No. 2 seed going into finals behind Ledecky's 1:54.73. Going into the final, both felt supremely confident

"It's feeling really good," Ledecky said. "I think 1:54 coming off the mile (less than an hour before) is really good for me. Puts me in a good spot for tomorrow."

"I'm relaxed," McKeon said. "I found the right amount of

nerves. I feel the most confident I have in a while, with my swimming and with myself."

The battle for gold, in all probability, would be McKeon's early speed vs. Ledecky's ability to motor down the stretch and run everyone down. McKeon, surely, was the only threat to the dynamo Ledecky, who had previously swum in 13 individual finals at an Olympic or World Championship, and she had won gold in all of them.

For the first 150 meters of the race, that's exactly what happened. McKeon built a big lead and was a half-second up at the halfway mark, but Ledecky closed the gap to one hundredth off the final turn. It was game on.

But little did either Ledecky or McKeon know: Federica Pellegrini was about to come up and steal the gold medal.

Pellegrini, who had amazingly won a medal in the 200 free at each of the previous six World Championships, was in third place with one lap to go. But closing speed has long been Pellegrini's calling card, and at that moment, she downshifted.

Pellegrini's split on the final 50 was 28.82, seven tenths faster than anyone else in the field. Ledecky tried to go to her extra gear, but the tank was empty. She ended up with the sixth-fastest closing 50 in the field.

"I could just feel it at the end that I didn't have that extra gear that I normally have," Ledecky said. "I was just trying to get my hand to the wall. I couldn't really see much the last 50."



Ledecky had no explanation as to what went wrong. All she knew was that Pellegrini, who never considered Ledecky unbeatable, was coming hard. Pellegrini touched the wall in 1:54.73, four hundredths slower than Ledecky's semi-final time, but it was enough to reclaim her gold medal.

Everything seemed to be in slow-motion to me in the water. At 150 meters on the turn we were all there, so I closed my eyes and went for it," Pellegrini said. "It's incredible. I didn't believe I would make it—I still can't believe it."

She had become the first swimmer, male or female, to win a medal in one event in seven straight World Championships. Pellegrini won silver in 2005, bronze in 2007 and then golds in 2009 and 2011—her 2009 win coming in a world record-time that still stands. But in both 2013 and 2015, she finished second—to Missy Franklin in 2013 and Ledecky in 2015.

Six years after she last stood atop the podium, Pellegrini had her retribution in Budapest.

Ledecky finished in 1:55.18, tied with McKeon for the silver medal. She had swum a half-second slower than she had the night before in the semi-finals and a second and a half slower than she swam on her way to gold in Rio last summer.

Afterwards, there were only questions about what went wrong. That's what happens when you lose your first major international final in 14 tries, after going undefeated for her first five years competing for Team USA.

"I don't know if I went out too hard or just was feeling yesterday, the rest of the meet," she said. "Maybe I haven't been quite on point as much as I would have hoped to have been this week, but I've still been feeling good. That was mostly a matter of how I executed my race. It wasn't anything really too wrong or additional to that."

Of course, no need to hit the panic button, as it would take an upset much bigger than Pellegrini's for Ledecky not to return to the top of the podium as part of the U.S. women's

800 free relay Thursday or in the 800 free individual race Saturday.

But after so many years of invulnerability, of always stepping up to the biggest challenge, it was a bit disconcerting watching Ledecky actually not have all the answers when she needed them.

Ledecky was calm and collected after the race, not pouting about one final gone wrong, and she smiled for photos on the medal podium with Pellegrini and McKeon. Setbacks happen to every swimmer, but for Ledecky, it had been a long time waiting for something to go wrong.

"It happens. Happens to every athlete at some point," Ledecky said. "I know this race will really motivate me moving forward and the rest of the week."

Just how motivated will she be? Just how much does Katie Ledecky hate to lose? She—and the rest of the world—are going to find out. ◀

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## KYLIE MASSE GETS OVER THE HUMP, MAKES HISTORY FOR CANADA

BY DAVID RIEDER

**K**ylie Masse's ascendance to the elite level of women's sprint backstroke was rapid and nothing short of stunning. It was just getting over the world record hump that took a little bit longer.

Two years after she didn't qualify for Canada's top international teams, the World Championships and Pan American Games, Masse showed up to this year's Canadian Trials in April as the co-Olympic bronze medalist in the women's 100 back. Going for a spot on her first World Championships team, she promptly put up the third-fastest performance ever in that event and barely missed the world record.

Masse swam a time of 58.21, the fastest 100 back time ever recorded in a textile suit and just nine hundredths off Gemma Spofforth's eight-year-old global record. She arrived in Budapest as the pre-race favorite, and in the semi-finals, she made another run at the record... only to come even closer but still fall short.

Masse's semi-final time was 58.18. Now, she was just six hundredths off the world record. Where could she find that little bit extra?

"It's just those really small details," Masse said after her semi-final swim. "The 100 is such a quick race, and the smallest thing can sometimes hinder or improve."

In the 24 hours between the 100 back semi-finals and final, the world record watch was on.

Spofforth had set her record at the 2009 World Championships in Rome while wearing a suit that contained polyurethane and was soon to be banned. But most of the world records set during the 2009 onslaught have since been broken, and Spofforth's 100 back was one of just five women's individual records from that year that remained heading into the World Championships.

Australia's Emily Seebohm, who at the start of the year owned the fastest-ever time in textile suit at 58.23, was ready for someone to crack the record. After her semi-final swim, she said, "We've been close for so long, so it'd be good to see it go."

Among the others hoping that Masse would make up those last few hundredths: Spofforth, who sent her good luck to Masse on Twitter.

In the final, Masse flipped third at the halfway mark, two tenths behind American Kathleen Baker, and Seebohm was second. But as she pushed towards 25 meters to go, she was pulling even and into the lead.

And then, the superimposed world record line popped up on the video scoreboards inside the Duna Arena. Masse was an arm's length in front. But as she swam past the 15-meter buoy and towards the flags, the red line was catching her. Her first career World title was all but secured, but would the global mark slip just out of her reach again?

Not this time. She touched the wall in 58.10. After twice missing the mark by the skin of her teeth, she had taken

it down by an even smaller margin. As she looked at the scoreboard, Masse could hardly believe what she was seeing.

“I was making sure I was reading the right name, reading the right time,” she said. “I was kind of at a loss of words.”

Before she could digest what had happened, an excited Baker grabbed her into an embrace. Baker was plenty pleased with her silver medal, but she, too, had been hoping to see an old record go down.

“To have Kylie go the world record in my heat is pretty incredible,” Baker said. “That record stood for a while—it’s suit-era—so I think that’s really setting the tone for backstrokers.”

Masse had been trying to keep her mind off the world record and the pressure to break it before the race, but that wasn’t so easy, not when she had twice already come so close.

“I knew I was there, and I knew I was close to it,” she said. “It was a goal, and I was aiming to do that here, but if not, then there’s plenty of other meets next year that I could maybe take a shot at it again. I really just came in with a focus on myself and what I’ve been working on this entire season and

just really soaking up the atmosphere here.”

And she pulled it off. She did it for herself, and she did it for Canada.

Before Masse, no Canadian women had ever won a World title in swimming. The last time a Canadian woman had set a world record: eight years earlier, at those same 2009 World Championships, when Annamay Pierse broke the world record in the 200 breast.

Masse has been a key piece of the renaissance in Canadian women’s swimming, a group which broke a 20-year Olympic medal drought with six podium finishes last year in Rio. Her world record will only expand her legend as the face of swimming in Canada, along with teammate and Olympic gold medalist Penny Oleksiak.

What her efforts have meant for her sport in her country has not been lost on Masse.

“I don’t really know what to say,” she said. “I’m so happy to be here, and to be able to represent Canada is such an honor.” ◀

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## FRUSTRATED RYAN MURPHY EYES RETURN TO THE TOP

BY DAVID RIEDER

In 2016, after winning three Olympic gold medals and setting a world record, Ryan Murphy had earned the undisputed title of the world's best backstroker. One year later, he's not that anymore, and that irks him.

In the men's 100 back, Murphy faced China's Xu Jiayu and American teammate Matt Grevers, and he came in third, finishing in a time (52.59) that was more than seven tenths off his world record of 51.85 from the year before. He was still on the medal podium, but that wasn't nearly good enough for Murphy.

"Not super happy. That's about as concise as I can put it right there," he said. "Not very happy about that."

The next morning, he got another chance at the 100 back, leading off the U.S. mixed 400 medley relay. His time of 52.34 was a quarter-second faster than he'd been the night before. A frustration swim? Oh yeah.

At that point, Murphy still had the 200 back to go, and he explained that he had felt more comfortable with his 200 back tempo throughout the year. But he couldn't put together the swim he was looking for in that event either, as Russia's Evgeny Rylov built a big lead and then held off Murphy on the last 50.

Rylov's winning time of 1:53.61 was one hundredth quicker

than Murphy swam to win Olympic gold in Rio. This time, Murphy finished six tenths back in 1:54.21, by no means an awful time but still not stellar, not at the level he had reached in his gold medal swims in Rio

"The whole warm-up, I don't know, I just felt a little bit off," Murphy said. "It's kind of been happening a lot this year. It's not really my race, not really my season, to be honest."

Indeed, Murphy has been a bit off best form all year. In March, he closed out his spectacular NCAA career with his fourth straight national titles in both the 100 and 200-yard backstrokes, but his times were nowhere close to his own American records in either distance.

After that meet, he turned professional—he signed an apparel deal with Speedo in June—and set his sights on long course full-time. And while he was mostly winning his domestic backstroke races, the times again just were not up to his usual standard.

When he got to Budapest, it still didn't click, and after he contributes a backstroke leg to the U.S. men's 400 medley relay Sunday morning, that will be it for a 2017 season that Murphy freely admits has been disappointing and frustrating.

What exactly happened this year? Well, life. Following the Olympics, he returned to being a student-athlete and tried

to catch up on pieces of that experience that he had put on hold as he pursued Olympic gold. Dave Durden, Murphy's coach at Cal-Berkeley, encouraged that.

"We didn't sit down at the beginning of this season and talk about how we wanted to perform at World Championships. We wanted him to get back into the college experience," Durden said at U.S. Nationals. "As a 21-year-old athlete, we had to make some compromises with that going into the Olympic year. As he comes off the Olympic year, let's go back and enjoy that lifestyle."

Not that it was all enjoyment. Murphy had intentionally planned to take some of his hardest classes at Cal-Berkeley during the post-Olympic year, and he ended up spending most of his free time doing homework instead of focusing on recovery.

But now that Murphy has made the transition to professional swimming and only two classes to go before he graduates from Cal, the distractions of college life won't be an issue for much longer—a welcome change for a 22-year-old stewing after seeing his results from Budapest.

He already sees his dissatisfaction turning into motivation.

"Without a doubt, no one's going to out-work me these next three years. People might have this year—I went to every practice, I worked hard, but I didn't have that same level of focus, that same amount of motivation to be great, and I think that's what's really going to come out of this meet," Murphy said.

"I'm not the best backstroker in the world at this point. It's a title I want. I'm going to do everything I can do to get that back."

That task will be difficult—Xu swam only one hundredth slower than Murphy's world record in the 100 back earlier this year, and he and Rylov are both younger than Murphy.

He's still the double Olympic gold medalist, but after the way things went in Budapest, Murphy views himself as the underdog, the man chasing an accomplishment that someone else has—just like he was before Rio.

Perhaps that makes Ryan Murphy just as dangerous as ever. ◀



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# HOW THEY TRAIN:

# ZACH BROWN AND MADISON HOMOVICH

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

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Zach Brown



Madison Homovich

Marlins of Raleigh (MOR) swimmers Zach Brown and Madison Homovich are rising seniors in high school. They benefit from constant cheering at practice, have had outstanding recent meets and made names for themselves beyond their native North Carolina.

underwater. His daily work ethic is outstanding, and he is very aware of his technique. A gradual increase in yardage from one year to the next, attention to small technical details, switching fly breathing to a two-up/one-down pattern, training with friends and loud cheering at practice have been the factors in his improvement," says Silver.

## PROGRESSION OF TIMES

ZACH BROWN				
SCY	2014	2015	2016	2017
100 Fly	52.28	50.61	49.14	48.25
200 Fly	1:54.59	1:50.87	1:46.59	1:46.19
400 IM	4:23.78	4:04.23	3:54.57	3:52.55
LC				
100 Fly	1:01.08	56.88	55.70	—
200 Fly	2:15.68	2:04.71	2:00.07	—
400 IM	5:16.01	4:43.51	4:33.57	—
MADISON HOMOVICH				
SCY	2014	2015	2016	2017
500 Free	4:43.53	4:44.55	4:40.90	—
1000 Free	9:42.80	10:03.74	9:39.09	9:38.16
400 IM	4:14.17	4:13.96	4:11.51	—
LC				
800 Free	8:36.82	8:46.05	8:36.33	—
1500 Free	16:32.95	16:37.15	16:30.37	—
400 IM	4:49.83	4:49.14	4:47.95	—

### ZACH BROWN

Brown had stellar 2016 long course and 2016-17 short course seasons. In March 2016 at the Southern Premier Meet in Knoxville, Tenn., he achieved his first Olympic Trials cut with a 2:01.33 in the 200 meter fly while racing Ryan Lochte. The Olympian was three seconds ahead at the 150 before Brown burned home in 31.3, making up all but .10 of the deficit. At Olympic Trials, he went a best 200 long course fly time of 2:00.07 to finish as the third fastest 18-and-under male.

In December at the Speedo Winter Junior Championships, he clocked 1:46.59 in the "A" final of the 200 yard fly. At NCSA Juniors in March, he helped MOR to a second-place combined team finish by scoring points in the 500 free (4:27.57), 1000 free (9:18.39), 100-200 fly (48.26-1:46.19) and 200-400 IM (1:50.65-3:52.55).

"Zach started swimming for MOR at age 8 and really started to improve at age 12," says Silver. "He can swim lots of different events and trains hard every day for all of them. He has kicked 1:00 short course on a board for a 100 and 11.2 for a 25

### HARDEST SETS

*Mexican set—make it and earn a taco!*

*Short Course Yards*

- 100 free @ 1:02.5
- 10 x 50 pull @ :45
- 200 @ 2:05
- 9 x 50 pull @ :45
- 300 @ 3:07.5
- 8 x 50 pull @ :45
- 400 @ 4:10
- 7 x 50 @ :40
- 500 @ 5:12.5
- 6 x 50 pull @ :45
- 600 @ 6:15
- 5 x 50 pull @ :45
- 700 @ 7:17.5
- 4 x 50 pull @ :45
- 800 @ 8:20
- 3 x 50 pull @ :45
- 900 @ 9:22.5
- 2 x 50 pull @ :45
- 1000 @ 10:25
- 1 x 50 pull @ :45

*Long Course*

- 9 x 300 on 4:30
- 3x the following:*
- #1 free cruise
  - #2 fly/free by 50s
  - #3 100 fly, 50 free

**Coach Silver:** "Number 9 is all fly. Zach went 3:34."

#### MADISON HOMOVICH

Homovich has been a Tar Heel State phenom for more than five years, and she has increasingly gained international recognition. A two-time USA Swimming junior national team member, she owns NC Swimming state records in the 11-12, 13-14, 15-16 and 15-18 age groups. Her 4:12.86 in the 400 meter free at the 2016 Olympic Trials put her on the team that competed at the U.S. Junior Pan Pac Championships, where she went 8:36.66 in her 800 free.

Last December, she helped the MOR girls to a fifth-place finish at the Speedo Winter Juniors where she won the 1650 with a 16:10.50 and also clocked a 4:40.95 in the 500 free. Swimming unshaved, at the NCSA meet in March 2017, Homovich won the high-point trophy while registering a 9:38.16 in the 1000 free and a 1:55.88 in the 200 yard back.

"Prior to joining MOR in 2015, Maddie was well coached by Kathy McKee in Chapel Hill," says Silver. "These days, she drives 34 miles one way to nine practices a week. She has been chosen for various state and national camps, and she's had the opportunity to hear elite athletes such as Lauren Perdue speak about their careers.

"Maddie is one of the happiest kids I've ever met. She has a great work ethic, loves to compete on a daily basis and is always supporting her teammates at practice. Her good-natured banter keeps everyone loose. She is very in tune with her stroke and communicates well about what feels good and what she needs to work on. She is very passionate about the sport," says her coach.

#### HARDEST SETS

##### Short Course Yards

- 100 x 100 as follows: 10 @ 1:20, 10 @ 1:15, 80 @ 1:05

**Coach Silver:** "Maddie made all but one, and this set has given her a lot of confidence in her training."

##### Long Course

- 40 x 50 @ :50 (holding 400 pace)

**Coach Silver:** "Maddie averages about 31.7. This set helps her get into a rhythm and hold it. The focus is on stroke count and tempo." ❖



# 2017 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS RACE ANALYSIS



See the data behind their big wins

[Explore the Results](#)



## U.S. BREAKS WOMEN'S 400 MEDLEY RELAY WORLD RECORD

BY ANDY ROSS

The United States women ended the Budapest World Championships on a huge note as the women broke the 400 medley relay world record with a 3:51.55 to break the 3:52.05 from the 2012 Olympics. Kathleen Baker, Lilly King, Kelsi Worrell and Simone Manuel broke the record that was held by the all-star cast of Missy Franklin, Rebecca Soni, Dana Vollmer and Allison Schmitt.

### Comparative splits:

Baker (58.54), King (1:04.48), Worrell (56.30), Manuel (52.23) Franklin (58.50), Soni (1:04.82), Vollmer (55.48), Schmitt (53.25)

The United States has now won 37 total medals in the pool at the World Championships, surpassing the record total of 36 from the 2007 Worlds in Melbourne ten years ago and the 1978 Worlds in West Berlin.

Russia broke the European Record for the silver medal as Anastasia Fesikova (58.96), Yulia Efimova (1:04.03), Svetlana Chimrova (56.99) and Veronika Popova (53.40) broke the record with a 3:53.38 for silver. The record surpasses Denmark's 3:55.01 from Rio last summer. The breast split from Efimova is the fastest breaststroke split by a woman in history.

Australia won the bronze medal with Emily Seebohm (58.53), Taylor McKeown (1:06.29), Emma McKeon (56.78) and Bronte Campbell (52.69) at 3:54.29. They just held off Canada (3:54.86) and Sweden (3:55.28). Sarah Sjöström (55.03) also had the fastest butterfly split of all-time.

China (3:57.69), Great Britain (3:59.51) and Italy (3:59.98) also competed in the championship final. ◀



## KATINKA HOSSZU WINS THIRD STRAIGHT 400 IM WORLD TITLE

BY ANDY ROSS

Katinka Hosszu won her fourth medal of the week as she won her third straight 400 IM World Title on Sunday night in Budapest at the FINA World Championships. Hosszu broke her championship record with a 4:29.33 to break the record she held from Rome in 2009 at 4:30.31. This is Hosszu's fourth overall World Title in this event.

Spain's Mireia Belmonte (4:32.17) collected silver and Canada's Sydney Pickrem (4:32.88) collected bronze after a disaster 200 IM final. Belmonte won her third medal of the meet.

Japan's Yui Ohashi (4:34.50), Japan's Sakiko Shimizu (4:35.62), USA's Leah Smith (4:36.09), USA's Elizabeth Beisel (4:37.63) and Great Britain's Hannah Miley (4:38.34) also competed in the championship final.

Hosszu joins Sarah Sjöström as the only female swimmers to win the same event at World Championships four times as Sjöström won the 100 fly in 2009, 2013, 2015 and 2017. Hosszu had the exact same streak as she failed to medal in 2011. ◀



## LILLY KING SETS 50 BREAST WORLD RECORD

BY ANDY ROSS

Lilly King broke her second world record of the meet as she set the 50 breast world record on Sunday night in Budapest at the FINA World Championships. King swam a 29.40 to break Ruta Meilutyte's 29.48 record from 2013. King held off a strong swim from Yulia Efimova of Russia who won the silver at 29.57. Efimova has now medaled at the last five World Championships in this event dating back to her gold in 2009.

American Katie Meili finished in third at 29.99 for her second individual medal of the meet. Lithuania's Ruta Meilutyte (30.20), Sweden's Jennie Johansson (30.31), Great Britain's Sarah Vasey (30.62), Italy's Arianna Castiglioni (30.74) and Canada's Rachel Nicol (30.80) also competed in the championship final.

This is the first time since Jessica Hardy went 29.80 in 2009 that an American has the world record in this event. It is also the first gold for an American since Hardy won in 2011. ◀



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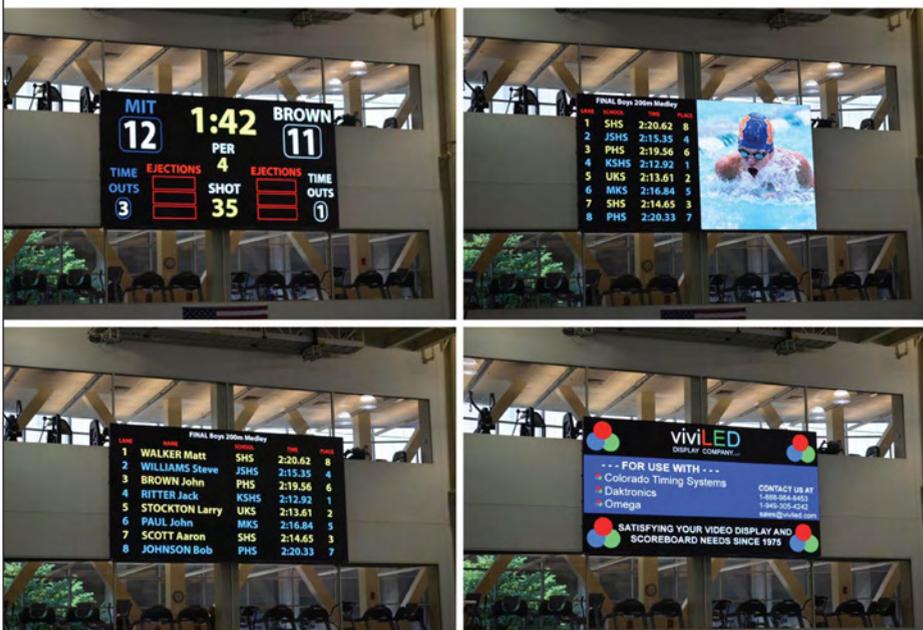
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## UNITED STATES ANNIHILATES MIXED 400 FREE RELAY WORLD RECORD

BY ANDY ROSS



## SARAH SJOSTROM BLASTS 50 FREE WORLD RECORD IN SEMIFINALS

BY ANDY ROSS

The United States finished off night seven at the 2017 FINA World Championships in Budapest with a huge world record in the mixed 400 free relay. Caeleb Dressel won his third gold medal of the night as he led off at 47.22. Nathan Adrian (47.49), Mallory Comerford (52.71) and Simone Manuel (52.18) also swam on the world record setting relay as they finished at 3:19.60 to demolish the record they set in 2015 at 3:23.05.

The Netherlands also finished under the old record as they went 3:21.81 with Ben Schwieter (49.12), Kyle Stolk (47.80), Femke Heemskerk (52.33) and Ranomi Kromowidjojo (52.56) as they broke the European Record. Canada finished with the bronze at 3:23.55. Yuri Kisil (48.51), Javier Acevedo (48.68), Chantal Van Landeghem (53.25) and Penny Oleksiak (53.11) swam for the Canadians.

Japan (3:24.78), Italy (3:24.89), Hungary (3:25.02), Russia (3:25.49) and Australia (3:25.51) also competed in the final. ◀

Sarah Sjöström of Sweden had herself a spectacular week as she broke her second world record of the meet on Saturday in the semifinals of the 50 free in Budapest. Sjöström swam a 23.67 to break the old record of 23.73 held by Britta Steffen of Germany from 2009. Sjöström was the only swimmer under 24 seconds in the semi-final as she will be the top seed tomorrow. Sjöström already won the 50 fly gold medal earlier in the night.

Reigning Olympic champion Pernille Blume of Denmark (24.05) is the second seed just ahead of American Simone Manuel (24.12). Manuel and Blume were on the podium with Sjöström in the 100 free last night as Manuel upset the Swede for the gold medal as Blume finished in bronze position.

Netherlands' Ranomi Kromowidjojo (24.20), Australia's Bronte Campbell (24.43), France's Anna Santamans (24.54), China's Liu Xiang (24.56) and Belarus' Aliaksandra Herasimenia (24.59) will also swim in the final. ◀



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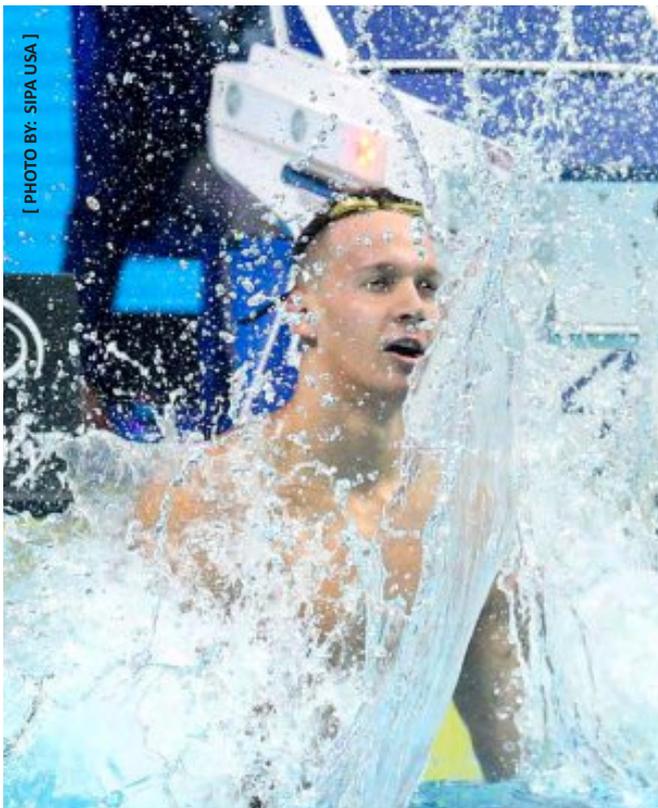






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## DRESSEL JUST MISSES MICHAEL PHELPS' 100 FLY WORLD RECORD

BY ANDY ROSS

Caeleb Dressel won his second gold medal of the night on Saturday at the 2017 FINA World Championships in Budapest. Dressel was oh-so-close to Michael Phelps' world record in the 100 fly as Dressel became the third swimmer under 50 seconds with a 49.86 to win the gold medal. Dressel is now the second fastest performer in history behind Phelps. He moved ahead of Serbian Milorad Cavic for second all-time. He became the first swimmer to break 50 seconds in a textile suit.

It was perhaps the fastest field in history as second went to Hungarian Krisztof Milak (50.62) breaking his World Junior record from last night. Singapore's Joseph Schooling and Great Britain's James Guy (50.83) tied for bronze in the event as those two picked up their first individual medals of the meet.

Hungary's Laszlo Cseh (50.92), China's Li Zhuohao (50.96), Australia's Grant Irvine (51.00) and France's Mehdy Metella (51.16) also competed in the very very quick final.

The US now has ten overall gold medals in the men's 100 fly at the World Championships as Dressel joins Phelps (2007-2011), Ian Crocker (2003, 2005), Pablo Morales (1986), Matt Gribble (1982), Joe Bottom (1978) and Gregory Jagenburg (1975) as gold medalists in the event. ◀

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## RYLOV HOLDS OFF RYAN MURPHY FOR 200 BACK GOLD

BY ANDY ROSS

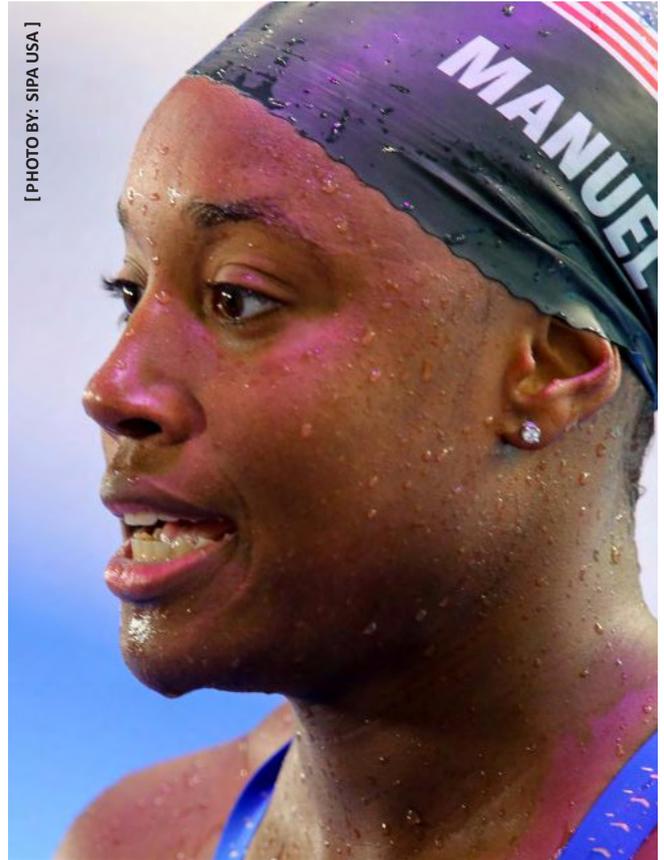
Russia's Evgeny Rylov took the 200 back race out hard on Friday night at the 2017 FINA World Championships in Budapest and held on for his first individual gold medal at a major international meet. Rylov held off the reigning Olympic champion in Ryan Murphy of the United States.

Rylov was under Aaron Peirsol's WR pace at 100 meters but eventually fell off the pace. Rylov won the gold with a 1:53.61 to set a new European record. Murphy won the silver with a 1:54.21 ahead of fellow American Jacob Pebley in bronze at 1:55.06.

Rylov was the 2014 Youth Olympic champion so he has had a lot of hype around him the last few years and he is showing that potential here in Budapest as this is his first gold medal at a senior meet.

Russia's Kliment Kolesnikov (1:55.14) broke a new World Junior record that he held from the semi-finals at 1:55.15. China's Xu Jiayu (1:55.26), Hungary's Peter Bernek (1:55.58), Japan's Ryosuke Irie (1:56.35) and Lithuania's Danas Rapsys (1:56.96) also competed in the championship final.

This is Russia's second overall gold medal in the men's 200 backstroke at the Worlds as Rylov joins Vladimir Selkov (1994) as the only Russian gold medalists in this event. Rylov was bronze at the 2016 Olympics and the 2015 Worlds in this event. ◀



## MANUEL RUNS DOWN SARAH SJOSTROM IN 100 FREE FINAL

BY ANDY ROSS

In a similar fashion to last summer, Simone Manuel ran down the World Record holder on the last 25 of the 100 free final. Last year it was Cate Campbell, this time it was Sarah Sjöström of Sweden. Manuel split a 27.06 to run down Sjöström to win the gold medal at 52.27 for a new American Record. Sjöström was second at 52.31 and Denmark's Pernille Blume was third at 52.69.

USA's Mallory Comerford (52.77), Netherlands' Ranomi Kromowidjojo (52.78), Canada's Penny Oleksiak (52.94), Australia's Bronte Campbell (53.18) and Australia's Emma McKeon (53.21) also competed in the stacked A-final that included five swimmers who had won gold individually at the Olympics.

This is the United States' third overall gold medal in the 100 free on the women's side and the first since 1998. Manuel joins Nicole Haislett (1991) and Jenny Thompson (1998) as winners in the event at the World Championships for the Americans. ◀



## LEDECKY ANCHORS USA TO FOURTH STRAIGHT 800 FREE RELAY TITLE

BY ANDY ROSS

The United States was in a tussle with China in the final of the women's 800 free relay, but Katie Ledecky anchored with a 1:54.02 to win the fourth straight world title for the US in the relay at the World Championships. Leah Smith (1:55.97), Mallory Comerford (1:56.92), Melanie Margalis (1:56.48) and Ledecky swam a 7:43.39 to win the gold medal.

The Americans had some pressure from China as they finished with the silver medal at 7:44.96. Ai Yanhan (1:56.62), Liu Zixuan (1:56.34), Zhang Yuhan (1:56.54) and Li Bingjie (1:55.46) swam for the Chinese and upgrade their bronze from the 2015 Worlds with a silver here in Budapest.

Australia held off Russia for bronze as Madison Wilson (1:57.33), Emma McKeon (1:56.26), Kotuku Ngawati (1:58.31) and Ariarne Titmus (1:56.61) swam for the Aussies as they held off Russia with a 7:48.51. Russia was fourth with 7:48.59.

Japan (7:50.43), Hungary (7:51.33), Netherlands (7:54.29) and Canada (7:55.57) also competed in the championship final.

Other big splits in the field were from Netherlands' Femke Heemskerk (1:55.46), Hungary's Katinka Hosszu (1:56.28) and Russia's lead-off Veronika Popova (1:55.95).

The United States has now won seven of the last eight world titles in the relay. ◀



## PEATY UNLEASHES 25.95 50 BREAST WORLD RECORD

BY ANDY ROSS

Adam Peaty unleashed his sprinting abilities in semi-finals of the men's 50 breast, once again lowering the World Record to astounding new lows.

Peaty jumped to a quick start, registering a reaction time of .64 and propelled to an immediate lead. He stopped the clock at a final time of 25.95, becoming the first man to ever swim beneath the 26-second mark.

His newest World Record comes on the heels of a swift 26.10 from this morning's prelims and marks the fourth time he has now downed the record.

### **50 Breast World Record Progression – Peaty Edition:**

2014 – 26.62 (European Championships)

2015 – 26.42 (FINA World Championships in Kazan)

2017 – 26.10 (FINA World Championships in Budapest)

2017 – 25.95 (FINA World Championships in Budapest) ▶



>>> LUKA LONCAR BEATS VIKTOR NAGY

## CROATIA BEATS HOST HUNGARY IN FINA WATER POLO FINAL

BY MICHAEL RANDAZZO, SWIMMING WORLD CONTRIBUTOR

In what must be considered both a milestone as well as searing disappointment for fans of Hungarian water polo, the unexpectedly brilliant run of their national team in the 2017 FINA World Championships came to a crashing halt with an 8-6 loss to Croatia in the finals. 7,000 spectators—the vast majority sporting the red, white and green of the Magyars—jammed into temporary stands at the Alfréd Hajós Swimming Complex, their excitement palatable as they roared in unison for their Hungarian heroes.

Those emotions, which surely fueled their team's success, also placed an unrealistic burden on a relatively inexperienced team. Hungary was playing in its first major championship final in more than three years, when Budapest hosted the 2014 European Championships.

Hungary's head coach, who maintained a relatively calm demeanor throughout the tournament, acknowledged his team's inexperience playing in the bright glare of a title match.

"We have to study how to play [in] the finals," a subdued Tamás Márcz said after the match. "[The Croatians] played a lot of finals in the past four-five years, and had more experience."

Then, striking a hopeful note on a night when his team re-established itself as a major power in international polo, Márcz added: "Maybe we are sad now but we will continue [to improve]."

For Croatia head coach Ivica Tucak, the feeling of being tops in the world was intoxicating.

"Everything functioned great, defense too, everything was amazing," said an elated Tucak. "What's most important is that we are the world champions."

Explaining the significance of the moment, he added: "We wanted the title, we believed that we'll win, and now, we are champions. For the first time, I see the difference between first and second place."

Tucak's team lost to Serbia in the 2015 FINA Worlds title match. On Thursday Croatia beat Serbia to advance to Saturday's final.

In an acknowledgement of just how important water polo success is to his country, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković—a former water polo player—made the three-hour trip from Zagreb to celebrate his national team's athletic success.

"Ten years after Melbourne, another gold medal at the World Championship is a fantastic achievement for Croatian water polo," he said. "We are very happy and proud and look forward to more success."

The opening period—played with many Hungarian fans standing and cheering—was the worst the team had played in seven tournament matches. After previously thriving on the energy of its fans, the home team appeared overmatched, allowing four goals, scoring none, and digging themselves into a hole they never truly escaped.

The Croatians expected that their opponents would be plagued by nerves playing such an important match in front of their countrymen.

"We knew that they were going to be nervous, it's not easy to play in front of 7,000 of their own fans," said Croatia's Luka Loncar. "We knew that we had a chance if we start strong."

And start strong they did. On his team's first possession of the game, Croatia's Sandro Sukno sliced through the Hungarian

defense on a counter and received a nifty pass from Javier Garcia to beat a surprised Viktor Nagy and give the visitors a 1-0 lead. Two minutes later Croatia went up by two as they quickly converted a man-up advantage with Loncar beating Nagy from two meters.

Andello Setka also got behind the Hungarian defense at the 2:54 mark to score yet another goal at two meters, and then Marco Macan slammed home a shot that Nagy got a hand on but could not stop to give Croatia a 4-0 lead and silence the crowd.

Offensively, the Hungarians could do nothing right. They tried to attack the middle of the Croatian defense by feeding the ball into Miklos Gor-Nagy, but defenders Macan, Andro Busjle and Ivan Buljubasic sagged defensively on Gor-Nagy, denying him the ball.

In the period, the Hungarians earned three man-up advantages but squandered them all, generating only one scoring chance on Croatian goalie Marko Bijac. Overall, Hungary misfired on their first five power play chances, through they did convert on their final three.

The second period saw the stirrings of a terrific comeback by the Hungarians. Marton Vamos, voted the tournament MVP on the strength of his 16 goals, opened the scoring for Hungary on his team's first possession.

The 6-6 left-hander rose so high that his shot traveled downhill as it beat Bijac. Defensively the Hungarians were able to disrupt the Croatian passing lanes while Nagy found his form, making six saves during the period and giving his team a chance to come back.

And come back they did, as Bela Torok side-armed a burner past Bijac to get the hosts within two by halftime.

The Hungarians came out of intermission determined to get the equalizer, which they did a little more than halfway through the third period. Balazs Erdelyi got his team within one on a power play strike a minute and a half in. Then, with exactly three minutes left in the period, Kristian Manhercz converted in a man-up situation to tie the match at four, causing the crowd to erupt in a frenzy of joy.

That emotional outburst proved to be short-lived. Garcia, a transplanted lefthander who has been a key contributor all tournament for Croatia, twice put a dagger in the Hungarian's title hopes.

Back-to-back exclusions on Gor-Nagy gave the visitors ample time to set up for a shot, and Garcia—originally from Spain but now a Croatian citizen—took full advantage. He



released a rocket that Nagy had in sight, until it deflected off a Hungarian defender's outstretched arm and into the goal, breaking the tie.

Luck, which every team needs to win, seemed to have abandoned the Hungarians. It was a stunning turnabout for a team that had enjoyed so much good fortune—and indicated that perhaps the Hungarians' magical ride to a world championship title might fall short.

On the visitor's next possession, Garcia sent another missile towards the Hungarian goal that deflected past their goalie, making the score 6-4 and deflating the hopes of the thousands of fans at Hajós Pool as well as countless others watching on television.

Hungary tried to muster a response but when Sukno hammered home his second goal of the game on a power play three minutes into the fourth, it effectively ended any Hungarian title hopes. Their final two scores—back-to-back goals by Vamos with the man advantage—teased the hopes of Hungary's fans until Sukno's third goal of the night settled the outcome.

After the match, Viktor Nagy, whose emotional play and antics—including a trademark finger-wag on saves—was overcome with emotion. He described both the support of the teams' fans and his failure to deliver them a title.

"It was amazing, to play at home, [where] 7,000 people watch us," he said at a press conference after the match. "Now I'm very sad and very sorry. We wanted to win tonight and we couldn't." ◀

# PARTING SHOT



NO, HE'S NOT GOING TO IMPALE HIMSELF. DIVER JONATHAN PAREDES OF MEXICO COMPETES IN THE 2017 FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY. UNLIKE THE SWIMMING COMPETITION, DIVING WAS HELD OUTDOORS, PROVIDING SOME AMAZING BACKDROPS OF THE CITY.

PHOTO COURTESY: SIPA USA

