



Swimming competition starts at the Foro Italiceo

Diva Pellegrini shines, Phelps get first gold

Six new World Records and the first gold for superstar Michael Phelps (USA) highlighted the first day of the swimming competitions of the 13th FINA World Championships at the Foro Italiceo in Rome (ITA). Federica Pellegrini, the Italian "diva" was also first in the women's 400m free, becoming the first woman to swim under the four-minute mark in this event. The women's 4x100m free relay of Netherlands, and Paul Biedermann (GER), were the other winners of the day.

In the first final of these championships, the men's 400m free, Oussama Mellouli (TUN) seemed to be in a good position to win the race – the Olympic champion of the 1500m free was first at the 300m mark - but with an acceleration in the last 100m from the fastest qualifier in the heats, Germany's Paul Biedermann swept away the Tunisian's dream of victory.

Biedermann, who had clocked 3:43.01 in the morning, touched the wall in 3:40.07, improving by 0.01 second the world record (WR) established by Ian Thorpe (AUS) in July 2002. It was the first World Championships' award for the German, who had been 18th in this event at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing (CHN) and fifth in the 200m free. Oussama Mellouli was second in 3:41.11, the same placing he earned two years ago in Melbourne (a result that was afterwards cancelled due to a violation of the doping rules). The bronze went to China's Lin Zhang in 3:41.35, one of the revelations of the 2008 Games in the "Water Cube", where he obtained the silver.

The favourite to win this event before the preliminaries actually took place in the morning was Korea's Tae-Hwan Park, Olympic and World champion in 2008 and 2007 respectively. But in the heats, Park was one of the deceptions of the day, with a disappointing 12th place in 3:46.04 (in Beijing, he had won in 3:41.86).

After the race, Biedermann said he was really glad to swim the WR and be world champion. It was a great race, he said, and he extended thanks to the other guys for pushing him on.

"Honestly I expected that someone would break the WR, but I didn't really expect it would be me. I feel really proud and honoured about that." The win was extra special, Biedermann said with a laugh, because he had actually focused more on the 200m this year. He also spoke of the German team, saying, "In Beijing we didn't do what we could do, and what we were capable of doing, and I think we will strike back here in Rome."

Among women, the crowd's attention was focused on the performance on the glamorous Italian champion Federica Pellegrini in the 400m free. Fastest in the morning (with 4:01.96) and holder of the unofficial World Record of 4:00.41 (set on June 27 in Pescara and pending FINA approval), Pellegrini did not disappoint and got gold in 3:59.15, becoming the first woman to swim under this event under four minutes (the first man to have done it was Rick DeMont, from the USA, when he stopped the watch at 3:58.18 at the 1973 and first edition of the FINA World Championships in Belgrade).

The biggest challenger for Pellegrini during the race was Joanne Jackson (GBR), officially the WR holder in this distance with her 4:00.66 established in Sheffield in March 2009. Jackson managed to improve her time in Rome (4:00.60), but that was not enough to stop the "locomotive" that is Pellegrini – who managed to win her first gold at the FINA World Championships, after being second in the 200m in 2005 and third also in the same event in 2007. At the Beijing 2008 Olympics, she was first in the pool's four laps and fifth in the 400m. The bronze medal went to another hero of those Games, Rebecca Adlington (GBR), winner of the 400m and 800m at the "Water Cube". Adlington clocked 4:00.79 (much faster than her 4:03.22 from Beijing...).

Pellegrini looked bewildered after her race, and admitted she was still "in a daze" about what she had accomplished. Nevertheless she was ecstatic, especially considering that she had had a difficult year, and a stress-related fever going into the race. "Usually swimmers dive in

Medals Table
After day 9

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	TOTAL
CHN	7	5	8	20
RUS	7	4	2	13
GER	4	1	0	5
ITA	2	1	4	7
GBR	2	1	1	4
ESP	1	6	0	7
USA	1	5	1	7
AUS	1	1	2	4
MEX	1	0	0	1
NED	1	0	0	1
CAN	0	1	4	5
GRE	0	1	0	1
TUN	0	1	0	1
BRA	0	0	1	1
CUB	0	0	1	1
FRA	0	0	1	1
MAS	0	0	1	1
RSA	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	27	27	27	81

the water", she said, "and that's it, you can't hear anything, but I heard the people screaming for me every metre. This beautiful crowd really helped me." Regarding her success at such a young age, she said, "Yes, I am quite young – 21 years old. However, every time we reach a goal there's always another goal to reach for," adding that she has, despite her youth, seen good times and bad. "I hope to keep doing well at least until 2012, and this has been a particular source of power and motivation for me."

The two finals of the 4x100m free (both men and women) were among the much awaited moments of the day. Starting with the women, the Netherlands, world record holder in this event since March 2008 (3:33.62), controlled the race very well and improved its WR, setting a time of 3:31.72 with a team composed by Inge Dekker, Ranomi Kromowidjojo, Femke Heemskerk and Marleen Veldhuis. It was

Netherlands' first gold medal in this event at the FINA World Championships, after being third in 2007 in Melbourne (and first at the 2008 Olympics). Germany, led by an inspired Britta Steffen (new WR in the 100m first leg of 52.22), got the silver in 3:31.83, while Australia (winner in 2005 and 2007) obtained the bronze in 3:33.01.

In the men's field, the new "duel" between the USA and France (after the thrilling race in Beijing, in which the Americans defeated the French by 0.08) was again favourable to the Olympic champions. With Michael Phelps leading off the US relay, the Americans touched first in 3:09.21 (new Championships record), leaving Russia in second (3:09.52) and France in third (3:09.89, despite the presence of Alain Bernard, second to swim, and Fred Bousquet, the last performer of the team). It was USA's 11th title in this event in the 13 editions of the FINA World Championships – they only lost in 2001 (to Australia) and in 2003 (to Russia).

WATER POLO

Germany dismisses European champion Montenegro to lower rungs of men's water polo

Recently crowned FINA World League and European champion Montenegro was tossed by the roadside as top-eight positions were dished out in the men's water polo competition at Foro Italicco today.

The Montenegrins commanded for much of the second-round clash with Germany but saw the lead disappear in the final quarter, only to gain a grasping goal and push the game to extra time.

While Germany had the spunk to score in the first of two extra periods, Montenegro could not get any ball past former Russian goalkeeper Alexander TCHIGIR and succumbed to ignominy and a shot at ninth place at best.

Germany advanced to the quarter-finals and will play Group D winner United States of America on Tuesday.

Hagen Stamm, the former World Cup champion player and head coach of Germany said the match was a "piece of cake".

"We were supposed to be the losers. Yesterday, our manager sent us a chocolate cake and we pretended that each slice was a player of Montenegro. We ate the whole cake and we enjoyed it. Perhaps the chocolate gave us the right motivation."

Montenegrin head coach Petar Porobic was dismayed with the result. "It's difficult to explain

what happened. We had a lot of chances but we weren't able to score enough. Germany fought until the end. We also were a bit unlucky but this is what sport is all about."

The group 9-12 will be a powerful quartet in its own right with Montenegro being joined by Australia, China and Italy who went down to Serbia 7-5.

World No 8 Australia bowed to Romania 7-5 and Canada controlled China 9-5 in the other second-round encounters.

In the Group 13-16, Brazil nudged out South Africa 8-7 and Macedonia crushed Kazakhstan 11-4.

The women's quarter-finals are being played on Monday with Hungary against Canada (14:00), Russia up against Olympic champion Netherlands (15:20), World Cup champion Australia taking on Greece (16:40) and Spain playing World League champion USA (21:00).

Game 55, 09:00, men, RSA 7 BRA 8

Referees: Stephen KNIGHTS (NZL), Steven ROTSART (USA)

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

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

Brazil managed to outlast South Africa in a very tight match at which the scores were locked at one, two, three, five, six and seven. Brazil gained the biggest advantage in the second quarter when BERTOLUZZI scored on extra for 5-3. But South Africa scored either side of the major break to level.

But it was Brazil which made the running, scoring the go-ahead goals for most of the game, claiming the winner through Felipe FRANCO on extra at 1:45.

Game 56, 10:20, men, KAZ 4 MKD 11

Referees: Ulrich SPIEGEL (GER), Igor MERNENKO (UZB).

Quarters: 1-3, 2-4, 0-1, 1-3

Extra man: KAZ 1/9; MKD 5/11

Macedonia was by far the better team but that did not stop Kazakhstan from toiling solidly throughout. With ANDREYEV and RUDAY working tirelessly it was still not enough against the physically stronger team with the presence to impress and intimidate. RUDAY'S smart drive to two metres gained him a valuable goal. The left-handed KRSTIC, devastating on the drive or even in centre forward, scored five while Nebojsa MILIC was dangerous whenever he had the ball in hand.

Game 57, 11:40, men, CAN 9 CHN 5

Referees: Mihaljo CIRIC (SRB), Daniel FLAHITE (AUS).

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

Extra man: CAN 0/9; CHN 0/10

Canada advanced to the top eight in the world

for the first time with a disciplined victory over China. The Canadians have never finished this high at World Championship or Olympic level and must fancy their chances against Spain on Tuesday in the quarter-finals. The victory was built on the early start and the 4-1 halftime lead prove insurmountable for China. WANG Beiming dragged China back to a goal behind with his two goals early in the third period but a four-goal burst by Canada had it ahead 8-3 early in the fourth.

LIANG and YU stemmed the flow but Feltham's cracker goal from a five-metre free throw wrapped up the top-eight spot at 3:50. The extra-man count looks worse than what it was with five goals coming from the man up but between 21 and 25 seconds after the original exclusion.

Game 58, 15:30, men, GER 9 MNE 8

in extra time (FT: 8-8)

Referees: Gabor KISZELLY (HUN), Filippo GOMEZ (ITA).

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

Extra man: GER 1/11; MNE 4/12

Germany caused the biggest upset of the tournament with a 9-8 victory in extra time after the game was locked at 8-8 after four periods. Germany's win came despite losing to Canada two days earlier and a 7-7 draw with Hungary before that. Montenegro had 3-1, 5-3, 6-4 and 7-5 leads before OELER gave Germany the first tied score since 3-3 at the end of the first quarter.

MACKEBEN sent Germany ahead on a searing counter-attack with three minutes remaining, much to the dismay of the huge flag-waving Montenegrin crowd.

Mladjan JANOVIC slipped in a low shot on extra at 2:20 to lock the game at 8-8. SAVIC had the ball ripped from his grip with 30 seconds remaining when the goal was at his mercy. Montenegro could not score and Germany's shot after a timeout four seconds from time failed to make the line, sending the game to extra time. SAVIC made amends with a goal on extra with 17 seconds left on the clock of the first three-minute period of extra time for 9-8.

TCHIGIR saved Montenegro's first extra-man attack of the second period of extra; Germany missed on a lob attempt; TCHIGIR stole the ball off the centre forward; POLITZE mis-passed to a Montenegrin; TCHIGIR deflected a shot over the back line; NAROSKA was excluded at 0:31; GOJKOVIC popped the ball into the post but it was intercepted by Germany, who played out time and the European champion was exiled to the 9-12 play-offs. Germany had earned a top-eight clash with the United States of America.

Game 59, 16:50, men, AUS 5 ROU 7

Referees: Sergio BORRELL (ESP), Boris MARGETA (SLO).

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

Extra man: AUS 3/9; ROM 3/6

Romania surged into the last eight with an excellent victory over Australia.

The dour match saw the faster Australians fail to exploit their greater mobility while allowing the outside shooters free rein. Australia concentrated on covering powerful centre forward RADU but this allowed other players free movement as Romania led 3-1 early in the second quarter and 5-3 in the third. CAMPBELL pulled it back to one goal but RADU on a wide-open counter after an Australian mistake and DIACONU with a snap outside shot took the game beyond Australia's reach. Romania now plays Croatia in the quarter-finals.

Game 60, 21:00, men, SRB 7 ITA 5

Referees: Erhan TULGA (TUR), Nikolaos STAVROPOULOS (GRE).

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

Serbia took its place in the top eight and a date with Hungary after a convincing win over Italy who relied heavily on captain CALCATERRA. Italy may have scored first but PRLAINOVIC gave Serbia a 2-1 lead with a shot from five metres and one on counter. GOCIC added to Italy's misery for 3-1 by midway through the second quarter. By halftime Italy was back in the picture but ALEKSIC made it 5-3 for Serbia three minutes into the third period when he scored from the top. CALCATERRA turned outside the near post to score on extra for 5-4 behind halfway through the third period but UDOVICIC pushed in a rebound which fell short of the line soon after for a two-goal margin by the final break. Campagna scored from 5m soon after the restart and RIZZO scored when all alone in front of goal but it was disallowed. UDOVICIC rubbed salt into the wound with a goal on counter for 7-5. Controversy reined at 1:47 when a suspected timeout was called but it was soon sorted and Italy actually took a timeout at 0:47 but it was too late to equalise and force extra time. The ball was lost, Serbia took a timeout and the bad news was all Italy's.

RESULTS



Swimming

MEN

400m Free

1. BIEDERMANN Paul GER 3:40.07 WR
2. MELLOULI Oussama TUN 3:41.11
3. ZHANG Lin CHN 3:41.35
4. VANDERKAAY Peter USA 3:43.20
5. GLAESNER Mads DEN 3:44.40
6. KIS Gergo HUN 3:46.30
7. COCHRANE Ryan CAN 3:46.60
8. DAVIES David GBR 3:47.02

4x100m Free Relay

1. USA United States of America 3:09.21
2. RUS Russia 3:09.52
3. FRA France 3:09.89
4. BRA Brazil 3:10.80
5. ITA Italy 3:11.93
5. RSA South Africa 3:11.93
7. GBR Great Britain 3:12.00
8. AUS Australia 3:12.40

WOMEN

400m Free

1. PELLEGRINI Federica ITA 3:59.15 WR
2. JACKSON Joanne GBR 4:00.60
3. ADLINGTON Rebecca GBR 4:00.79
4. SCHMITT Allison USA 4:02.51
5. BALMY Coralie FRA 4:03.29
6. POTEK Camelia Alina ROU 4:03.41
7. ETIENNE Ophelie Cyrielle FRA 4:04.54
8. FRIIS Lotte DEN 4:07.62

4x100m Free Relay

1. NED Netherlands 3:31.72 WR
2. GER Germany 3:31.83
3. AUS Australia 3:33.01
4. USA United States of America 3:35.23
5. SWE Sweden 3:35.35
6. CHN P.R. of China 3:35.63
7. GBR Great Britain 3:36.99
8. HUN Hungary 3:39.53

RECORDS

6 WORLD RECORDS

100 Fly Women 56.44 sf Sarah Sjostron, SWE
 400 Free Men 3:40.07 Paul Biedermann, GER
 200 IM Women 2:07.03 Ariana Kukors, USA
 400 Free Women 3:59.15 Federica Pellegrini, ITA
 100 Free Women 52.22 R Britta Steffen, GER
 4x100 Free Women 3:31.72 Netherlands, NED

26 CHAMPIONSHIPS RECORDS

100 Fly Women 56.44 sf Sarah Sjostron, SWE
 100 Fly Women 56.76h Sarah Sjostron, SWE
 400 Free Men 3:40.07 Paul Biedermann, GER
 200 IM Women 2:07.03sf Ariana Kukors, USA
 200 IM Women 2:08.53h Ariana Kukors, USA
 50 Fly Men 22.90h Roland Schoeman, RSA
 50 Fly Men 22.90h Rafael Munoz, ESP
 50 Fly Men 22.68sf Rafael Munoz, ESP
 400 Free Women 3:59.15 Federica Pellegrini, ITA
 400 Free Women 4:01.96h Federica Pellegrini, ITA
 100 Breast Men 58.96 sf Eric Shanteau, USA
 100 Breast Men 58.98 h Brenton Rickard, AUS
 4x100 Free Women 3:31.72 Netherlands, NED
 4x100 Free Women 3:34.74h Germany, GER
 4x100 Free Women 3:34.94h Netherlands, NED
 4x100 Free Women 3:35.26h Australia, AUS
 100 Free Women 52.22 R Britta Steffen, GER
 100 Free Women 53.02 Rh Fran Halsall, GBR
 4x100 Free Men 3:09.21 United States, USA
 4x100 Free Men 3:11.26h Brasil, BRA
 4x100 Free Men 3:11.38h Freeance, FreeA
 4x100 Free Men 3:12.58h Australia, AUS
 100 Free Men 47.09 R Cesar Cielo Filho, BRA
 100 Free Men 47.39 Rh Cesar Cielo Filho, BRA
 100 Free Men 47.52 Rh Stephan Nystrand, BRA
 100 Free Men 47.77 Rh Brent Hayden, CAN

