



Two new stars are born in Swimming

Retain their names: Sjostrom (SWE) and Kukors (USA)

Sarah Sjostrom (SWE, 15 years old) and Ariana Kukors (USA, 20) were the two protagonists of the second day of the swimming competitions at the Foro Italico. Winners of the women's 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley respectively in World Record times, these two names made in the best possible way their entry into the elite of world swimming. In a session marked by five new WR, Milorad Cavic (SRB, men's 50m butterfly) won the first gold ever for his country, and Brenton Rickard (AUS) was best in the men's 100m breaststroke. Regarding deceptions, the non-qualification of Aaron Peirsol (USA) for the final of the men's 100m backstroke was a negative surprise.

In the men's 100m breaststroke, Brenton Rickard (AUS) - third fastest in the semi-final (59.27) - controlled the race very well, overcame his main challengers and touched first in a new World Record (WR) of 58.58. The previous official WR was established by Kosuke Kitajima (JPN) at the 2008 Olympic Games (58.91), although Ukraine's Igor Borysik had clocked 58.67 on June 11, 2009 (a WR pending FINA approval). Rickard, who collected three medals at home, in Melbourne in 2007 (second in the 200m breaststroke, third in the 100m and first in the 4x100 medley relay), and two awards at the "Water Cube" (silver in the 200m breaststroke and 4x100m medley relay), has achieved in Rome his first gold at this level.

On this accomplishment, Rickard said he had come to Rome to race and he was happy to get his hands on the wall first. "This gold means everything to me," he said, adding that he has been with the same coach since the age of 10, and thus it is a very special honour for them both. "We have both tracked along the same path, and to finally end up here with gold - individually - is great for both of us." Rickard said that for him, "racing is racing", and his award came only after training as hard as he physically (and mentally) could manage, and racing as fast as he physically could.

With a fantastic second half to the race, French Hugues Duboscq was very close to beating the Australian, but obtained the silver in 58.64 (after

coming second in the event at the 2005 Worlds in Montreal and third at the 2008 Olympics), while Cameron van der Burgh of South Africa got bronze in 58.95. Curiously, neither Eric Shanteau (USA), the fastest of the semi-final, nor Igor Borysik reached the podium: the American was fourth in 58.98 and the Ukrainian was fifth in 59.23.

The second World Record of the day was established in the women's 100m butterfly, with the success of the "revelation" of the championships so far - Sweden's Sarah Sjostrom (15 years old). After setting a WR in the semi-final (56.44), Sjostrom swam even better in the decisive race, getting gold in 56.06. The silver medallist, Australia's Jessica Schipper, also swam under the previous best mark (56.23) but her effort was not enough to climb to the top position on the podium (she badly missed the last stroke). It was of course the first medal at this level for Sjostrom (and the second gold medal ever at the Worlds for a female Swedish swimmer, after the 2007 50m butterfly success of her compatriot Therese Alshammar), while for Schipper this success represented her eighth award at FINA World Championships (after one bronze in 2003, two gold and one silver in 2005, and two gold and one silver in 2007). She had also accumulated three medals in Beijing (gold in the medley relay and two bronze in the breaststroke events).

The bronze medal (56.86) went to China's Liuyang Jiao, one of the revelations last year at the "Water Cube", where she was silver medallist in the 200m butterfly.

The Stockholm based Sjostrom - coached by Carl Jenner - was in shock after her victory, and had few words to describe her feelings. "It will take a few days for this to sink in," she said, but admitted that it was "awesome, and completely crazy" to be a world champion at her age. Her personal best in this event had considerably dropped in the last two days, she added, but not without a lot of hard work, which had resulted in massive improvements. To celebrate, she will "take some holidays after the

competition".

The third final of the day, the men's 50m butterfly, constituted a test for Spain's Rafael Munoz, world record holder in this event (since April 2009 with 22.43) and the fastest of the semi-final. For his first appearance at this level, Munoz did not confirm his credentials and finished third (22.88), behind Australia's Matt Targett (silver in 22.73) and Milorad Cavic (SRB, first in 22.67, bettering by 0.01 the championships record established by the Spaniard in the semi-final). Cavic, one of the swimmers in evidence in Beijing after losing the gold medal to Phelps in the 100m butterfly by 0.01, earned in the Italian capital the first swimming gold (and medal) for his country (Serbia) at the Worlds (Darjan Petric,

Medals Table
After day 10

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	TOTAL
CHN	7	5	9	21
RUS	7	4	2	13
GER	4	1	0	5
USA	2	5	1	8
AUS	2	4	2	8
ITA	2	1	4	7
GBR	2	1	1	4
ESP	1	6	1	8
MEX	1	0	0	1
NED	1	0	0	1
SRB	1	0	0	1
SWE	1	0	0	1
CAN	0	1	4	5
FRA	0	1	1	2
GRE	0	1	0	1
TUN	0	1	0	1
RSA	0	0	2	2
BRA	0	0	1	1
CUB	0	0	1	1
HUN	0	0	1	1
MAS	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	31	31	31	93

competing for Yugoslavia in 1978, had won one silver and one bronze in Berlin).

Cavic said he is very grateful for this medal, calling it an amazing way to start the championships and that there "is definitely something to being crowned the fastest butterfly in the world." He proceeded to explain, however, that although he feels amazing and very happy, he is "overly focused on the 100m butterfly to enjoy this moment". When Cavic was asked how he manages to win when it counts, he said that he has a very good coach, with whom he has a very open line of communication. Since the Olympics, he said, he has been "listening to [his] body and doing what [he] believed was the correct thing to do." What happened in Beijing is behind him, he said, and he is now only looking forward.

In the fourth and last final of the second day of the swimming at the Foro Italico, Ariana Kukors gave USA its first individual gold medal, touching first in a new WR of 2:06.15 – she had already established a new best mark for this event in the semi-finals with 2:07.03, which was curiously the same time gained by the silver medallist in the final, a "certain" Stephanie Rice (AUS, Olympic champion in 2008). Kukors (20 years old) had as her best result a fifth place in the 400m IM at the 2007 Worlds in Melbourne. The bronze medal went to another newcomer at this level - Hungary's Katinka Hosszu (2:07.46). Kirsty Coventry (ZIM), second in 2007, was fourth with a time of 2:08.94 (two years ago, her silver was obtained in a time of 2:10.76).

Afterwards, Kukors explained that she had only even been able to swim this event due to a scratch from one of her teammates – Elizabeth Pelton – because of a scheduling conflict. "I found out at the last minute of the trials that I would swim this event, and I did some last minute training, with more lifting to get my strength up and focusing on the small things, like my turns," she explained, adding that the underwater aspect of her race, which is one of her strengths, was very strong. Nevertheless, she was surprised with the time of 2:06.15 and said that having Rice chase her home was a great motivation. "It was a great race for both of us," she said.

Concerning the semi-finals, the highlight of the day was the WR of Rebecca Soni (USA), who qualified first for the final with the time of 1:04.84, better than the 1:05.09 obtained by Leisel Jones (AUS) in March 2006. Soni had been second to Jones at the 2008 Games in this event. The fourth WR of the session was set by Anastasia Zueva (RUS) in the first semi-

final of the women's 100m backstroke: the Russian clocked 58.48, improving the former best mark established by Kirsty Coventry (ZIM) at the 2008 Olympics (58.77). In the other semi-final, Coventry did not improve, and took second in 59.21.

One of the surprises of the day was the ninth place finish of Aaron Peirsol (USA) in the semi-finals of the men's 100m backstroke, an event in which he was world champion in 2007 and Olympic champion in 2008. Peirsol clocked 53.22, far from the unofficial WR (pending FINA approval) he set on July 8, 2009 in Indianapolis in 51.94.

WATER POLO

Gerolymou pushes Greece into women's water polo medal contention.

Angeliki GEROLYMOU was the toast of Greece as her mighty collection of four goals was enough to sink one of the best teams in the world in the women's water polo competition at Foro Italico.

GEROLYMOU (27) scored twice from the penalty line and once on extra as Greece led World Cup champion Australia 3-1 early in the second quarter of their quarter-final clash.

Australia struggled to gain three goals — two to Kate GYNTER and one to Bronwen KNOX — as it shut down Greece for 20 minutes of actual play.

But the superb defence — not matched by a class attack — came unstuck 90 seconds from time when GEROLYMOU chanced her arm with a lob from deep to gift her team the semifinal berth.

For Australia to miss the top four in a major competition is rare but world championships have not been easy despite winning one gold, one silver and two bronzes. The worst result for the team was seventh in Barcelona in 2003.

For Greece it was a triumph and now the next hurdle as its chases a medal is to take on defending World champion and World League champion United States of America, who beat Spain 9-6.

Spain had been one of the fancies for the tournament but must now be content to regroup for the 5th-8th phase.

The other semifinal will see Canada clash with Russia.

Canada took control of Hungary, winning 9-7 after trailing for only two minutes midway through the second quarter. The margin was three until the final nine seconds when Hungary gained a consolation goal.

Russia beat Olympic champion Netherlands 9-7. The win appeared easier than the two-goal margin and the Russians could be back from the wilderness come Friday.

In the 9-12 bracket, Germany came from behind to beat New Zealand 8-7 and Italy defeated China 9-7.

Four teams closed their campaigns in day-nine action.

Brazil beat Kazakhstan 11-8 in a penalty shootout for 13th position after the game was locked at 6-6 by full time and 7-7 after two periods of extra time. Brazil won the best-of-five shootout 4-1.

In the play-off for 15th and 16th, Kazakhstan defeated Uzbekistan 16-4.

Game 61, 08:40, women, UZB 16 RSA 9

Classification 15th-16th

Referees: Stephen KNIGHTS (NZL), Gideon REEMNET (NED).

Quarters: 4-4, 5-1, 2-2, 5-2

Extra man: UZB 7/11; 5/12

In the battle for last place, neither team wanted the accolade. Both teams fought vigorously and none more so than the inexperienced South Africans.

They still managed to score what many coaches would regard as a winning score but Uzbekistan was smarter on the extra-man plays and appeared more balanced around the pool. For Uzbekistan the result was a repeat of 2005 in Montreal, Canada. For South Africa it was a valuable debut at this level.

Game 62, 10:00, women, KAZ 8 BRA 11

in penalty shootout (FT: 6-6. ET 7-7. Pens: 1-4).

Classification 13th-14th

Referees: NI Shi Wei (CHN), Risto DAMCEVSKI (MKD).

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

Extra man: KAZ 2/10; BRA 2/9

Brazil outlasted Kazakhstan with a penalty-shootout victory to finish 13th, well down on 10th in 2007 and a tournament best of ninth, also here in Rome, in 1994. For Kazakhstan, 14th was its worst finish in six appearances with a best eighth in 2001. Brazil controlled the middle half of the game but needed to score on extra at 1:12 to level the game at 6-6 in the final quarter. There was no score in the first period of extra but RYBACHEK with a lob on extra and Marina CANETTI with a backhand from the post sent the game to the penalty shootout. Brazil shot first and sent in all four attempts but Kazakhstan's MYRZABEKOVA had the first attempt blocked. ZUBKOVA converted the second Kazakh attempt but KUTUSOVA missed and she had to watch as VIGNA scored to win the game for Brazil.

Game 63, 12:40, women, ITA 9 CHN 5

Semifinals 9th-12th

Referees: Gaetan TURCOTTE (CAN), Steven ROTSART (USA).

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

Extra man: ITA 3/5; CHN 2/12

Italy came through in the last quarter to make sure of its strong showing heading into the play-off for ninth against Germany. China was 3-2 ahead until two minutes before halftime. Then Italian captain DI MARIO struck twice to take Italy through to what was an unassailable lead. She opened the fourth-quarter scoring and finished with four goals. China scored through MA and SUN Yating and then missed a chance when GIGLI smacked down a power shot. It proved to be the final nail in the coffin for China as BOSURGI scored on the counter with CASANOVA lobbing the final goal from centre forward. The extra-man statistics for China proved telling and the team has not performed to expectations.

Game 64, 11:20, women, GER 8 NZL 7

Semifinals 9th-12th

Referees: Irfan SADEKOV (RUS), Nader GHAFOURI (IRI).

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

Extra man: GER 1/3; NZL 3/7

Germany needed a sliding five-metre shot inside the last minute to advance to the play-off for ninth. In a game where New Zealand dominated, Germany only took the lead for the first time just over five minutes from full time.

The Kiwis came back through a third goal to HUDSON on extra but ZOLLNER scored her third goal of the final period with the unguarded shot off the free throw, just rolling across the line for victory.

Game 65, 14:00, women, HUN 7 CAN 9

Quarter-final 1st-8th

Referees: Boris MARGETA (SLO), Decio PATELLI (BRA).

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

Extra man: HUN 3/8, CAN 3/9

Canada became the first team to go to the semifinals with an emphatic victory over Russia. Hungary was in the hunt in the second quarter when after 2-0 down went 4-3 ahead but Canada regrouped, went to 5-4 only to see DRAVUCZ pulled Russia back to even. With ROBINSON on fire from outside, Canada went 8-5 ahead soon after the final break. Canada went to a timeout at 2:34 and converted the extra-man chance for 9-6 and the game was dead.

TOTH scored a consolation goal from centre forward but the Canadians were already dancing poolside.

Game 66, 15:20, women, RUS 9 NED 7

Quarter-final 1st-8th

Referees: Mark KOGANOV (AZE), Ursula WENGEROTH (SUI).

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

Extra Man: RUS2/5; NED 0/8

Russia will go head to head with Canada in the semifinals following a disciplined match against the Olympic champion Dutch. Russia was fast on the counter, made a multitude of intercepts, forced the Dutch into errors and exploited the weak goalkeeper. The Netherlands showed glimpses of Beijing but the new-look team with the new coach is building for a defence of its Olympic title in three years' time. VAN BELKUM scored two of her three goals when the game was lost. Russia scored from all round the pool. This year is not to be for the Netherlands. The Russians are looking sharp and must be considered a top chance for a gold-medal-final berth.

Game 67, 16:40, women, AUS 3 GRE 4

Quarter-final 1st-8th

Referees: Nenad PERIS (CRO), Radu MATAACHE (ROU).

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

Extra Man: 0/4; GRE 1/8

Greece pulled off a big upset in taking the quarter-final against World Cup champion Australia. In the words of Australian captain Mel RIPPON: "You can't score three goals and hope to win a game." Australia was made to look ordinary by Greece went ahead 2-0 and then 3-1 with two penalty goals and one on extra. Australia kept Greece goal-less for the next 20 minutes but only scored two in that period. GEROLYMOU scored her fourth goal with a lob 90 seconds from full time and Australia, as with much of the game, had no answer. Neither side performed on extra-man plays.

Game 68, 21:00, women, ESP 6 USA 9

Quarter-final 1st-8th

Referees: Alan BALFANBAYEV (KAZ), Mario BRGULJAN (MNE).

Quarters: 3-2, 0-3, 1-2, 2-2 World and World League champion United States of America withstood a late charge by Spain to win the fourth quarter-final. Spain started strongly with a 3-1 lead after six minutes, thanks to two GIL goals (her 13th and 14th for the tournament). HAYES proved instrumental in the USA's resurgence after scoring the game's opening goal, netting either side of the first break to level the game. Triple Olympian PETRI fired in the next two and USA was 5-3 ahead at halftime. Fellow triple Olympic medallist VILLA and 2007 Melbourne World Championship most valuable player WENGER rammed the advantage home

in the third to 7-3 before Spain's PAREJA bounced a penalty attempt into the crossbar. GARCIA muscled in a centre-forward goal to trail 7-4 after three periods. USA's RULON bounced her penalty attempt left at the start of the fourth period before STEFFENS lobbed goal on the next attack for 8-4. MESEGUER and GARCIA narrowed the margin to 8-6 inside three minutes but GREGORKA made it a three-goal margin at 2:15 and despite a Spanish timeout, no further score eventuated.

RESULTS



Swimming

MEN

100M BREASTSTROKE

1. RICKARD Brenton AUS 58.58 WR
2. DUBOSCQ Hugues FRA 58.64
3. VAN DER BURGH Cameron RSA 58.95
4. SHANTEAU Eric USA 58.98
5. BORYSIK Igor UKR 59.23
6. TITENIS Giedrius LTU 59.27
7. FELDWEHR Hendrik GER 59.33
8. BARBOSA Henrique BRA 59.54

50M BUTTERFLY

1. CAVIC Milorad SRB 22.67
2. TARGETT Matthew AUS 22.73
3. MUNOZ Rafael ESP 22.88
4. ANDKJAER Jakob Schiott DEN 22.93
5. SANTOS Nicholas BRA 23.00
6. DUNFORD Jason KEN 23.04
7. SUBIRATS Albert VEN 23.07
8. DRAGANJA Duje CRO 23.10

WOMEN

200M INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

1. KUKORS Ariana USA 2:06.15 WR
2. RICE Stephanie AUS 2:07.03
3. HOSSZU Katinka HUN 2:07.46
4. COVENTRY Kirsty ZIM 2:08.94
5. HJORTHANSEN Julie DEN 2:09.73
6. MILEY Hannah GBR 2:09.91
7. VERRASZTO Evelyn HUN 2:09.98
8. MUFFAT Camille FRA 2:10.85

100M BUTTERFLY

1. SJOSTROM Sarah SWE 56.06 WR
2. SCHIPPER Jessicah AUS 56.23
3. JIAO Liuyang CHN 56.86
4. MONGEL Aurore FRA 56.89
5. SILVA Gabriella BRA 56.94
5. VOLLMER Dana USA 56.94

7. SNILDAL Ingvild NOR 56.96
8. VELDHUIS Magdalena NED 57.79
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RECORDS (DAY 2)

5 WORLD RECORDS

100 Fly Women 56.06 Sarah Sjöström SWE
100 Breast Men 58.58 Brenton Rickard AUS
200 IM Women 2:06.15 Ariana Kukors USA
100 Back Women 58.48 Anastasia Zueva RUS
100 Breast Women 1:04.84 Rebecca Soni USA

12 CHAMPIONSHIPS RECORDS

200 IM Women 2:06.15 Ariana Kukors USA
50 Fly Men 22.67 Milorad Čavić SRB
100 Fly Women 56.06 Sarah Sjöström SWE
100 Breast Men 58.58 Brenton Rickard AUS
100 Back Women 58.48sf Anastasia Zueva RUS
100 Back Women 58.78h Gemma Spofforth GBR
100 Breast Women 1:04.84 Rebecca Soni USA
100 Breast Women 1:05.66 Rebecca Soni USA
200 Free Men 1:43.65 Paul Biedermann GER
100 Back Men 52.39sf Junya Koga JPN
100 Back Men 52.76sf Aschwin Wildeboer ESP
100 Back Men 52.93h Aschwin Wildeboer ESP