



While the "Cielo" falls again on French heads Men's 100m fly: Phelps 2 – Cavic 0

At the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, the most "difficult" of Michael Phelps' eight gold medals was undoubtedly his win in the men's 100m butterfly. In a thrilling duel with Serbia's Milorad Cavic, the American legend triumphed by the minimum possible difference of 0.01 (50.58 for Phelps and 50.59 for Cavic). In Rome, at the 13th FINA World Championships, Phelps and Cavic were once more the fastest in the semi-finals, with the Serbian establishing a new World Record of 50.01. Therefore, the decisive race in this event was perhaps the most awaited final of these championships.

Leaving the first initiative to Cavic (like in Beijing), Phelps excelled once more in the last 25m and took the gold in a new WR of 49.82, being the first man to swim the 100m butterfly under the 50 second-mark. Cavic (who led for most of the race) got the silver in 49.95, also under the previous WR. This time, Phelps' victory was clear and the joy expressed by the American at the end of his effort says enough about the importance of this outcome for the best swimmer in history. Moreover, it was Phelps' fourth gold medal in Rome (and fifth award), while Cavic had won the 50m butterfly. The bronze medal (like in the shorter distance) went to Spain's Rafael Munoz (50.41).

Phelps displayed his characteristic calm cheerfulness when speaking after the race. "It was kind of cool," he said, "the whole race I could just feel everyone's eyes; every second. It was one of the most exciting races I've been a part of. There was an unbelievable crowd, a totally packed house." He also talked about his fondness for the 100m butterfly: "I've always been able to have interesting races in the 100m," he said, recalling his previous race in Beijing against Cavic, as well as numerous memorable occasions when he competed against Ian Crocker (USA). In general, he noted, "The coolest thing is to have races like these because they bring out the best in people, because you really have to go to the next level when you're racing people like this."

Cavic, understandably, was not as joyful, but nevertheless said it was "an incredible race", in

which they "all went a lot faster than we thought [they] would". Predictably, he was asked what went wrong with his tactics, to which he responded: "There was nothing wrong with my tactic. I went out fast in the first 50m, if anything I went a little too fast," he considered. "I was too excited, I felt too much emotion. I knew that to beat Phelps I had to get a big lead in the first half of the race, but when I turned at the 50m mark I saw that he was too close and I knew at the end that it was going to be very tight." In the end, he concluded, "Michael Phelps is Michael Phelps and he does what he does, and he did it."

"Cielo" means "sky" and one of the preferred comics of the French people – Asterix and Obelix – display one character which is constantly afraid the "sky" will fall on his head. But this indeed seems to be the fate of France with the Brazilian "Cielo" (Cesar), who for the third time in less than one year has left two swimmers from the European country behind him: at the "Water Cube" of the 2008 Olympic Games, Cesar Cielo got the gold in the 50m free, leaving Amaury Leveaux in second and Alain Bernard in third. On Day 5 of the 13th FINA World Championships in Rome (ITA), in the 100m free, Cielo won once more, this time with Bernard in second and Fred Bousquet in third. In the seventh finals session of these championships, in the 50m free, the same destiny, but again with a different combination: Cielo gets the gold, Bousquet the silver and Leveaux the bronze.

From the first metres of the short race, the Brazilian was in control of the operations and touched the wall in 21.08 (a new championships record), while Bousquet (the world record holder in 20.94) finished in 21.21 and Leveaux concluded in 21.25. After his two winning performances in the Italian capital (victories in the 50m and 100m free), Cesar is presently the best sprinter in the world and already assured the honour of being the best Brazilian swimmer in history.

"I'm really, really happy," he said of his race, joking that he's "getting kind of used to having

Medals Table After day 15

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	TOTAL
CHN	11	7	10	28
USA	9	9	7	25
RUS	7	8	4	19
GER	6	3	1	10
AUS	4	5	6	15
ITA	4	1	5	10
GBR	3	3	2	8
SRB	3	1	0	4
BRA	2	1	1	4
ESP	1	7	3	11
HUN	1	1	2	4
JPN	1	1	1	3
DEN	1	1	0	2
RSA	1	0	2	3
MEX	1	0	0	1
NED	1	0	0	1
SWE	1	0	0	1
ZIM	1	0	0	1
CAN	0	3	5	8
FRA	0	3	3	6
TUN	0	2	0	2
GRE	0	1	0	1
POL	0	1	0	1
AUT	0	0	1	1
CRO	0	0	1	1
CUB	0	0	1	1
LTU	0	0	1	1
MAS	0	0	1	1
NOR	0	0	1	1
ROU	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	58	58	59*	175

*TWO BRONZE MEDALS IN THE MENS
200M BREASTSTROKE

two French just behind me". He then explained that he actually hadn't been feeling very good today; that he woke up and was "really feeling the 100m" and he "knew it was going to be tough going through the 50m." He just tried to keep positive all day, he added, and was glad that he touched first. His results at these championships steam from what he calls "the best season I had in my life, both in dedication and results", as well as the ability to



immediately focus on the 50m after the 100m victory was under his belt, because he knew that “everyone was going to try and beat him and get their best times”.

In the first final of the day – the women’s 50m butterfly - the two fastest swimmers in Rome before the decisive race, Sweden’s Therese Alshammar and Dutch Marleen Veldhuis (they have both established a new World Record in the semi-finals), were naturally the favourites for victory, but things are sometimes not as simple as they look. At the end of the short race, it was Australia’s Marieke Guehrer (winner of the 2008 FINA Swimming World Cup) who took the gold in 25.48. It was the Australian’s second award in these championships (after the bronze in the 4x100m free), and the first gold of her first participation at this competition.

The silver went to China’s Yafei Zhou (25.57) and the bronze to Ingvild Snildal, from Norway (25.58), in what was the second medal for the female swimmers of the Nordic country in the history of the FINA World Championships – Lene Jenssen finished second in the 100m free at the 1978 edition in Berlin.

The first World Record of the day was established by Kirsty Coventry (ZIM) in the women’s 200m backstroke. Improving her own best mark of 2:05.24 (when she became Olympic champion in Beijing), Coventry clocked 2:04.81 and “upgraded” the silver she obtained two years in Melbourne (in 2005, in Montreal, she was world champion in this event). It was Zimbabwean’s first medal in Rome but seventh award overall at FINA World Championships. Anastasia Zueva (RUS), already second in the 100m backstroke, got the silver in 2:04.94, while 16-year-old Elizabeth Beisel (GBR) got her first medal at this level (bronze in 2:06.39).

Coventry was pleased with her gold, and said that the results of the race were just one more indicator that “women’s swimming has been getting higher and higher in the last few years. The closer the races,” she continued, “the better we’re getting, and it’s better for the fans.” She confirmed that the 200m backstroke is her favourite event and said it has “kind of been her baby throughout the last few years”, referring to the international success she has had with it. “Last year,” she recalled, while showing that she likes a challenge, “there were only a couple of us around the 2:06.00 mark, and now we have several people going around that time, so it’s very encouraging and I think it’s good.”

In the longest event of the session, the

women’s 800m free, Olympic champion Rebecca Adlington (GBR, third in the 400m in the Italian capital) was the fastest qualifier, but was never in the lead of the race and finished in fourth with 8:17.90, slower than the WR she had set in the “Water Cube” (8:14.10). In Rome, Camelia Potec (ROU) controlled the operations until the 300m-mark, but from then Lotte Friis (DEN) took the command of the final and got the gold in 8:15.92. Her win, which gives Denmark its first swimming world title ever, comes after she placed third in Beijing and already second in the 1500m at the Foro Italico. Friis Joanne Jackson (GBR, second in the 400m) was once more the silver medalist (8:16.66), while Alessia Filippi (ITA, first in the 1500m in Rome and second of the 800m at the Games) made an extraordinary final effort to finish third in 8:17.21.

“I know I was not the favourite going into this race. I think it was probably Rebecca, and I never dreamed it would be me who took the gold”, Friis said later, with humility. “I am very happy and relieved that this meet has turned out so well for me”.

For the third time in the history of the FINA World Championships (the others being in 1994 and 2003), China got the title in the women’s 4x100m medley relay, finishing first in a new World Record of 3:52.19 – faster than the 3:52.69 clocked by Australia in Beijing, when they got the Olympic title. It was the fourth title in these championships for China, after the victories in the men’s 800m free, women’s 50m backstroke and women’s 4x200m free relay. Australia’s quartet was second in 3:52.58 (they had won in 2001, 2005 and 2007), while Germany got the bronze in 3:55.79. The team of the United States, present on every podium of this event since the first edition of the championships in 1973, finished the heats in a disappointing 10th place, while the Italians were disqualified on the preliminaries due an early start from the fourth swimmer of the relay.

In the semi-final of the men’s 50m backstroke, Liam Tancock (GBR) got the fastest time with a new WR of 24.08, better than the performance set by Randall Bal (USA) in December 2008, when he swam the distance in 24.33.

WATER POLO

Udovicic spearheads Serbia to men’s gold in sudden-death penalty shootout

Serbia needed a sudden-death penalty

shootout to capture a gold medal in its own right in the men’s water polo final at Foro Italico late tonight.

In a game that lasted nearly two hours and had the capacity crowd of more than 5000 sitting on the edge of their seats, the Serbians proved king of the pool, missing just two shots in the shootout compared to Spain’s three.

For the record, the game ended at 6-6 and 7-7 after extra time. Both teams missed two shots in the initial shootout to finish the rotation 10-10.

The first three players for each team converted their shots with Guillermo MOLINA and Andrija PRLAINOVIC making up for their initial misses. Then Blai MALLARACH, who barred out with his first attempt, had the horror situation of having his second shot blocked and then watched as Milan ALEKSIC barrelled in his shot, sending his ecstatic team-mates and support staff into the water for celebrations.

This was one of the most dynamic finals in recent times with superb defence, power shots and controlled play from both teams for the entire match.

Two of the tournament’s best players sat up and took centre stage with the star player all fortnight — Vanya UDOVICIC — scoring the first three goals for Serbia, the team he captains. He scored twice in the shootout for a personal tally of five.

Spain relied heavily on the powerful left-hander Xavier GARCIA whose immense contribution to the final did not gain the reward he so sorely sought. He scored a magnificent five goals in regular time and did not disappoint with his two shots in the shootout.

It was Garcia who sent Spain to extra time with his shot off extra-man with just 11 seconds remaining in the game.

Serbia has had many incarnations as a water polo nation. Yugoslavia won two gold, one silver and three bronzes at world championships. Serbia & Montenegro won gold and bronze and now as Serbia alone, it has a gold medal.

Spain gained its sixth world championship medal following victories in 1998 and 2001 plus three previous silver medals.

Croatia won the bronze medal under the guidance of super-coach Ratko RUDIC. It didn’t have the golden hue of that won in Melbourne two years ago but it was gained against the No 2-ranked team in the world, the United States of America.

Rudic declared after the match: “The gold medal (match) is not always the best one. The bronze medal we won today was extremely worth it if we look at the many issues we have been through in our training and our tournament. My players played and strived with all their heart. It’s a young team with a great

potential for the future. Truly, Rome brings me luck,² he said in reference to his leading Italy to the championship here in 1994.

Captain Samir BARAC said: "Now the whole summer makes sense to me. I dedicate this victory to my family, especially to my daughters Emma and Sara.² The fairytale ending that the USA women enjoyed last night « albeit under the shadow of a Canadian protest, which was not upheld today < the USA men did not perform under pressure when needed most.

The USA led for much of the match but Croatia tasted the lead for the first time in the third period and thrust the knife in the throat with two quick goals in the dying minutes for a two-advantage.

USA head coach Terry SCHROEDER said: "Obviously we came here to win a medal. We failed, but we are satisfied with the good tournament we played."

Captain Tony AZEVEDO said his team started well. "Towards the end of the match, Croatia took advantage of their six on five while we didn't."

In the battle for minor places Olympic champion Hungary defeated Germany 9-6 and Romania beat Canada by the same score for fifth and sixth.

Game 93, 09:00, men, ROU 9 CAN 6

Classification 7th-8th

Referees: Mialjo CIRIC (SRB), Gideon REEMNET (NED)

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

Extra man: ROM 1/6; CAN 2/9

Romania boosted its ranking from 11th in Melbourne with a win from the front. In a relatively quiet game for the referees, Romania maintained the pressure throughout and never allowed Canada a chance to overtake, although CONSTANTIN-BICARI scored for Canada on extra with eight seconds left in the third quarter for 6-5. IOSEP took Romania two ahead at the start of the fourth and this led to victory. Canada advanced from 12th in Melbourne in what has been a good year for the North Americans. Canada came close to a top-four finish but will also be happy to have a top-eight ranking.

Game 94, 10:40, men, HUN 9 GER 6

Classification 5th-6th

Referees: Nenad PERIS (CRO), Niloas STAVROPOULOS (GRE).

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

Extra man: HUN4/5; GER 3/12

Hungary has nine world championship medals but this year is not going to swell the medal cabinet. Fifth place over Germany was the same as 2001, meaning Hungary drops after the Olympic gold achievement. Germany

moved up from eighth in 2007 but wasn't in a position to claim fifth, trailing 5-1 at halftime and 8-2 at the final break. Germany came good in the last quarter but only when Hungary had the game sewn up. Hungary used the game to good effect with four from five on extra — the best statistics by any team at the tournament.

Game 95, 16:00, men, CRO 8 USA 6

Bronze Medal

Referees: Sergio BORRELL (ESP), Daniel FLAHIVE (AUS)

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

Croatia won its second medal at world championship level, following up from gold in Melbourne two years ago. The USA missed a chance to become the first team outside Europe to gain a medal at the FINA World Championships.

The USA went 3-1 up in the first quarter but allowed BOSKOVIC to score on extra to close the period in the searing afternoon heat. The USA scored its second-quarter goal on extra while Croatia's sole goal came from the penalty spot through OBRADOVIC. BARAC levelled at 4-4 with an unguarded shot from the top two minutes into the third period. BUSLJE let loose a cannon from the top left to give Croatia the first lead at 1:40 after several good shooting opportunities from the USA failed to find their mark. POWERS scored from two metres off a cross pass on extra for 5-5 at 5:46 in the last quarter but then the damage was done soon after as Croatia went two ahead through OBRADAVIC and BURIC. The first was on extra but the second was from a powerful centre-forward turn while guarded by two players. The USA's final real chance to narrow the gap came when BEAUBIEN creased the bar on extra at 1:47. Croatia's goal attempt went wide, the USA took a timeout and gained consecutive exclusions. AZEVEDO drilled the ball from the top for 7-6 at 0:59. Croatia gained an exclusion and, after the excluded player returned, HINIC scored off the set pass down the left for 8-6 at 0:27. The final USA attempt stopped short of the line.

Game 96, 21:00, men, SRB 14 ESP 13

in sudden death penalty shootout

(FT: 6-6. ET: 7-7. Pens: 7-6)

Gold Medal

Referees: Boris MARGETA (SLO), Mark KOGANOV (AZE).

Quarters: 3-2, 0-0, 1-2, 2-2, 1-1, 0-0, Pens: 7-6

Serbia won in sudden death penalty shootout in an action packed game that pleased the capacity crowd. Theatre and drama ruled in this fantastic testament to the game of water polo. The game was set alight by miracle men Vanya UDOVICIC and Xavier GARCIA. By the end of

the first quarter they had scored the five goals as Serbia led 3-2. The power shooting of both teams was matched by the excellent defence in the second quarter as no goal eventuated. One did come a nano-second after the buzzer at halftime, a rebound flicked in by the centre forward but no shift on the scoreboard. The forest of arms was in action in the third quarter but Garcia scored his third on extra from deep right after a timeout play. FILIPOVIC stunned the Spanish defence with a lob just after exclusion time for a 4-3 lead for Serbia at 5:49. MOLINA scored off the drive down the left with a long slider under SORO'S left arm to level the game at 3:41. The capacity crowd was thrilled by massive shots but had to be impressed with the channelling of the shots and stoppages of the ball. The fourth quarter promised much and delivered quickly with FILIPOVIC gaining his second from the top on action on the first Serbian attack. Serbia used a timeout and when the expulsion time was over the ball slipped into PIJETLOVIC at two metres on the hand and he sent it in with a reflex action. GARCIA proved why he is on the all-star team at these championships with a screamer from well outside into the top left corner for 6-5 at 2:51. The pool was electric and GARCIA was helping spark the fire. Serbia took a second timeout at 1:59 after gaining an ejection but the ball was stolen from the player's hand on the third pass. Spain went to a timeout only 10 seconds into the counter. The resulting shot bounced to halfway and the last minute had arrived. Spain eventually shot and regained the ball. Time was ticking and the ball twice made it to GARCIA's steady hand. While heavily guarded, he shot off his left arm and tied the game with just 11 seconds remaining and to the thunderous roar of the appreciative crowd. FILIPOVIC tried a lob just before full time but no score and the game went to extra time. PEREZ earned an extra man in the first period of extra time and MOLINA blasted past SORO at 2:16. RADJEN returned the favour for Serbia with a shot off the post on extra above the goalkeeper's head for 7-7 at 0:59. MINGUELL missed a sitter on a two-on-one with the goalkeeper, hoping to get a penalty shot but he turned away from the goal. The second period of extra time saw PRLAINOVIC score off a free throw but it was disallowed. Serbian coach UDOVICIC complained about his player not receiving a kickout when three players moved on the centre forward. It was worth a yellow card. When Serbia regained the ball soon after a timeout was called with q10 seconds left. FILIPOVIC took the final shot of extra time but it careered over the crossbar, forcing the game into a penalty shootout. Spain won the toss and elected to shoot first. MOLINA missed the first

shot for Spain and PRLAINOVIC, the third Serbian also had his shot blocked. MALLARACH then had his bounce up into the bar. It came down to GOCIC to win the match for Serbia but he missed and the shooting went to sudden death. The rotation saw the first six shooters score and then MALLARACH had his shot blocked at 13-13. ALEKSIC stepped up and scored to give Serbia the title on the 18th shot in the shootout. The tournament's best goalkeeper, SORO, had saved the day for Serbia.

Triple champions enjoy spotlight

In the aftermath of the women's gold-medal water polo final, two athletes were happier than most.

Captain Brenda Villa and outside shooter Heather Petri were positively glowing at the press conference.

They came to Rome as double champions and left as triple world champions. The pair also won in Barcelona in 2003 and Melbourne in 2007.

No country had taken three golds at a FINA World Championships for women before and the USA broke the deadlock with the Netherlands and Italy.

Villa and Petri also won silver in Montreal in 2005.

Their trophy cabinets at home also contain three Olympic medals (silver in 2000, bronze in 2004 and silver again in 2008). Throw in four FINA World League golds and a silver and these women can rightfully be called "heavy metal".

FINA SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION FOR SWIMWEAR APPROVAL

As announced by the FINA Bureau, a Commission led by Prof. Jan-Anders Manson (from EPFL in Lausanne, SUI) and formed by scientific experts and an athlete's representative was appointed to control the swimwear approval process and to monitor the development of the swimsuit industry based on the rules established by the FINA Bureau and the measurable scientific tests on buoyancy and permeability.

This Commission is formed as follows:

Chairman:

Prof. Jan-Anders Manson (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne, SUI)

Members:

Mr. Rafael Escalas - Athletes' representative
 Prof. David Pendergast (State University of New York - Buffalo) - USA
 Prof. Brian Blanksby (University of Western Australia) - AUS
 Associate Prof. Shigahiro Takahashi (Chukyo University) - JPN

RESULTS

MEN

50M FREESTYLE

1. CIELO FILHO Cesar BRA 21.08
2. BOUSQUET Frederick FRA 21.21
3. LEVEAUX Amaury FRA 21.25
4. DRAGANJA Duje CRO 21.38
5. JONES Cullen USA 21.47
6. ADRIAN Nathan USA 21.49
7. BOVELL III George TRI 21.51
8. NYSTRAND Stefan SWE 21.53

100M BUTTERFLY

1. PHELPS Michael USA 49.82 WR
2. CAVIC Milorad SRB 49.95
3. MUNOZ Rafael ESP 50.41
4. SUBIRATS Albert VEN 50.79
5. LAUTERSTEIN Andrew AUS 50.85
6. DUNFORD Jason KEN 51.07
7. MCGILL Tyler USA 51.42
8. MANGABEIRA Gabriel BRA 51.74

WOMEN

50M BUTTERFLY

1. GUEHRER Marieke AUS 25.48
2. ZHOU Yafei CHN 25.57
3. SNILDAL Ingvild NOR 25.58
4. ALSHAMMAR Therese SWE 25.59
5. VELDHIJS Magdalena NED 25.63
6. SJOSTROM Sarah SWE 25.66
7. BUI DUYET Diane FRA 25.92
8. DE PAULA Daynara BRA 26.12

200M BACKSTROKE

1. COVENTRY Kirsty ZIM 2:04.81 WR
2. ZUEVA Anastasia RUS 2:04.94
3. BEISEL Elizabeth USA 2:06.39
4. SPOFFORTH Gemma GBR 2:06.66
5. SIMMONDS Elizabeth GBR 2:07.98
6. PELTON Elizabeth USA 2:08.04
7. CASTEL Alexianne FRA 2:08.13
8. TERAOKAWA Aya JPN 2:08.89

800M FREESTYLE

1. FRIIS Lotte DEN 8:15.92
2. JACKSON Joanne GBR 8:16.66

3. FILIPPI Alessia ITA 8:17.21
4. ADLINGTON Rebecca GBR 8:17.90
5. POTEK Camelia Alina ROU 8:20.44
6. VILLAECIJA Erika ESP 8:25.97
7. ETIENNE Ophelie Cyrielle FRA 8:26.35
8. TROTT Wendy RSA 8:29.61
9. KOBRICH SCHIMPL Kristel CHI 8:30.10

4x100M MEDLEY RELAY

1. CHN P. R. of China 3:52.19 WR
2. AUS Australia 3:52.58
3. GER Germany 3:55.79
4. GBR Great Britain 3:57.03
5. NED Netherlands 3:57.31
6. CAN Canada 3:57.87
7. JPN Japan 3:57.93
8. BRA Brazil 3:58.83

RECORDS (DAY 7)

4 WORLD RECORDS

200 Back Women 2:04.81 Kirsty Coventry ZIM
 100 Fly Men 49.82 Michael Phelps USA
 50 Back Men 24.08sf Liam Tancock GBR
 4x100 MR Women 3:52.19 China CHN

12 CHAMPIONSHIPS RECORDS

200 Back Women 2:04.81 Kirsty Coventry ZIM
 100 Fly Men 49.82 Michael Phelps USA
 50 Back Women 24.08sf Liam Tancock GBR
 4x100 MR Women 3:52.19 China CHN
 800 Free Women 8:15.92 Lotte Friis NOR
 50 Back Men 24.49h Guilherme Guido BRA
 50 Free Women 24.08sf Kate Campbell AUS
 50 Free Women 24.24h Kate Campbell AUS
 50m Breast Women 30.24h Yuliya Efimova RUS
 50m Breast Women 30.34h Kasey Carlsson USA
 50 Free Men 21.08 Cesar Cielo Filho BRA