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Hungary doubles down the titles, Paltrinieri comes 4th

2017.03.27. 11:52 CET

Hungarian swimmers enjoyed an exceptional day in Eilat, in the opening leg of the LEN European Open Water Swimming Cup. Kristof Rasovszky won the men's event while Katalin Somenek came first among the women. Italy's 1500m Olympic champion Gregorio Paltrinieri just missed the podium in his first ever 10km race.

The opening leg of the LEN European Open Water Swimming Cup was highlighted by the 'sea-debut' of Gregorio Paltrinieri. In fact, the Italian, who clinched the Olympic, world and European titles in the 1500m free in the past three years, returned to the open water races as he had been a usual participant in this discipline before he turned 17 (and his attention solely to pool competitions).

Now, testing something new as well as his borders, Paltrinieri opted to try the 10km and he chose the European Cup in Eilat for the premiere. For most of the time, he swam in the leading pack but towards the end of the race Hungary's junior world and European champion youngster Kristof Rasovszky switched gears and left everyone behind. Russia's experienced duo, Kirill Abrosimov and Evgenii Drattsev also finished ahead of Paltrinieri who came fourth, trailing 26sec to the winner.

"I enjoyed the race after all, managed to keep up with the others for most of the time" Paltrinieri said after the event. "In the last lap I felt as if I was losing the necessary energy to go with the leaders and I fell behind. Still, it was a good experience, totally different from pool swimming but I learnt a lot here."

"It was a fine race, I enjoyed every minute of it" Hungary's gold medallist Kristof Rasovszky said. "It was a tough fight for four and a half laps, at the end I managed to break away and build a gap which secured a calm finish."

Among the women, Kata Somenek won a neck-to-neck dual over Slovenia's Spela Pelse. The Hungarian led from the beginning but couldn't get too far ahead, still, she touched in 1.9sec ahead of Pelse.

LEN European Open Water Swimming Cup, 1st leg, Eilat (ISR)

Men

1. **Kristof Rasovszky (HUN) 1:49:43.35**
2. **Kirill Abrosimov (RUS) 1:50:02.50**
3. **Evgenii Drattsev (RUS) 1:50:08.00**
4. **Gregorio Paltrinieri (ITA) 1:50.10.60**

Women

1. **Katalin Somenek (HUN) 2:00:24.05**
2. **Spela Pelse (SLO) 2:00:25.95**
3. **Nikolett Szilagyi (HUN) 2:00.36.75**

2017 European Open Water Swimming Cup - Legs

Leg 1 - Eilat (ISR), 26 March (10km)

Leg 2 - Barcelona (ESP), 1 July (10km)

Leg 3 - Navia (ESP), 5 August (7.5km)

Leg 4 - Copenhagen (DEN), 26 August (6km)

Final - Bracciano (ITA), 16-17 September (5 and 10km)

Source: www.len.eu