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The 12th FINA World Championships: hosted by Australia for the third time

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After Perth hosted the World Championships twice Melbourne was granted the right to stage the event in spring, from 17 March - 1 April, 2007. Just like before in Australia the conduct of the event was successful which was also demonstrated by the figures: by more than 215 000 visitors on site new attendance record was set. Dominance by American swimmer continued.

2158 athletes from 167 countries attended the event in the summer-like spring season exceeding the athletes' headcount threshold of 2000 again after the decline in Montreal, 2005. For the record, the final voting resulted in choosing Melbourne as opposed to Dubai (15-6) at the Convention by the FINA Bureau in Barcelona, 2003.

The World Championships in Melbourne took place in 3 key venues: St. Kilda Beach hosted open water swimming events, diving and water polo took place in Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre while a temporary pool was established in the Rod Laver Arena for synchronised swimming and swimming events. The swimming pool was named after Susie O'Neill - Olympic champion of 200m butterfly at the Atlanta Olympics and of 200m freestyle at the Sydney Olympics, holder of altogether 8 Olympic medals.

The US team topped the medal table with 21 gold, 14 silver and 5 bronze medals, while Russia had 11 gold, 6 silver and 8 bronze and the host, Australia claimed 9 gold, 9 silver and 8 bronze medals at the World Championships. A total of 27 nations claimed at least one medal.

Melbourne was not the luckiest place for the Hungarian delegation, men's water polo team clinched a silver and László Cseh claimed a bronze in 200m medley (finishing after Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte), but that was all.

Swimming - Michael Phelps claiming 7, Libby Lenton claiming 5 world champion titles

The most popular tournament of the World Championships was swimming this time again, 1142 swimmers participated in the events, many of them made extraordinary performance. For instance, Michael Phelps, who -at the peak of his career- became world champion in

200m freestyle, 100 and 200m butterfly, 200 and 400m medley, as well as in 4x100 and 4x200 freestyle relay.

Michael Phelps and one of his World Record (200m IM):

Furthermore, he claimed gold breaching the world record in 200m freestyle, 200m butterfly, the two medley events as well as in the longer relay event. Fellow swimmers did an excellent job, also, Ryan Lochte clinched gold in a relay event as well as in 200m backstroke (and won 3 silver medals, too), Ben Wildman-Tobriner excelled in 50m freestyle, Aaron Peirsol triumphed in 100m backstroke and Brendan Hansen claimed gold in 100m breaststroke.

Regarding others: two gold medals were won by the Polish: Przemyslaw Stanczyk in 800m freestyle and Mateusz Sawrymowicz in 1500m freestyle, in addition, the gold in 50m butterfly went to Roland Schoeman from South Africa, Gerhard Zandberg, also from South Africa, proved to be the best in 50m backstroke, Ukrainian Oleg Lisogor clinched gold (50m breaststroke), Japanese Kosuke Kitajima became world champion in 200m breaststroke and the line of world champions continued with South Korean Park Tae-Hwan in 400m freestyle.

Melbourne hosted an extremely exciting tournament and the tightest 100m freestyle final of all times. Italian Filippo Magnini drew with Canadian Brent Hayden, the difference between the time of the first and eighth swimmers was 38 (!) hundredths only.

As for women, Australian athletes excelled, just as they did 2 years earlier: Libby Lenton won 5 gold medals, in 50m and 100m freestyle, 100m butterfly, as well as in 4x100 freestyle and medley relay. Leisel Jones was really close clinching gold in 100m and 200m breaststroke and medley relay, however, she had to settle with the silver medal in 50m breaststroke (Jessicah Schipper clinched 2 gold and a silver for Australia).

Libby Lenton's triumph in 100m butterfly:

Considering individual events French Laure Manadou could double (200 and 400m freestyle) together with American Katie Ziegler (800 and 1500m freestyle), Katie Hoff (200 and 400m medley), but American Leila Vaziri (50m backstroke), Natalie Coughlin (100m backstroke), Margaret Hoelzer (200m backstroke), Jessica Hardy (50m breaststroke) and Swedish Therese Alshammar (50m butterfly) became world champions, too.

Open water swimming - Russian dominance

Both men and women's tournaments saw 2 Russian gold medals and a German world champion. For men, Vladimir Dyatchin (10 km) and Yuri Kudinov (25 km) proved to be the best, whereas for women, Larisa Ilchenko won both in 5 and 10 km.

Thomas Lurz from Germany had a similar overall result as back in Montreal: a gold (5 km) and a silver (10 km), Russian Evgeny Drattsev claimed a silver (5 km) and a bronze (10 km), while in the women's field Australian Kate Brookes-Peterson claimed bronze doubling in 5 and 10 km.

Synchronised swimming - Russian dominance again with some Spanish challenges

The technical routine debuted this time, therefore synchronised swimmers competed in a total of 7 events now. Russians, the queens of this discipline won 6 out of the 7 events, however, French swimmer, Virginie Dedieu excelled in the solo freestyle event again after her victory in Montreal with runner-up Natalia Ischenko again - who compensated in the technical programme.

Virgine Dedieu's solo free program:

The Spanish again did an excellent job resulting in 4 silver and 2 bronze medals for them, Japan claimed 2 silver and a bronze while the US won a bronze medal in an attempt to somewhat balance the Russian dominance.

Diving - China: 9 first ranks out of 10

There was only one man who could break the Chinese hegemony, Russian diver Gleb Galperin won the 10m event and claimed silver with Dmiriy Dobroskok in synchronised diving duet. Qin Kai could double gaining world champion title in 3m and 3m synchronised diving as well. (Iconic Russian diver, Dmitri Sautin claimed a bronze in 3m at the age of 37.)

As for women, Guo Jingjing had a similar achievement, she won a gold in the solo event, the runner-up was her duet partner Wu Minxia. Beside gold medals clinched by the Chinese, five nations could win medals in diving this time.

Water polo - Croatian and American victory

Regarding men's water polo, the fight between iconic coaches Dénes Kemény and Ratko Rudic saw the victory of the Croatian expert this time. In the final Croatia beat Hungary in the extra time - in fact, a year later Hungarians could celebrate victory in Beijing for the third time.

Croatian gold in the men's final:

In 2005 at the World Championships in Montreal Hungarians losing against Serbia in the final had an easier way leading to the prelims. After an easy group victory they played Germany in the top 8, then an extremely tight and hard fight against powerhouse Spanish team, where the extra time saw the victory of the team with Tamás Kásás. In the end the team of Rafael Aguilar beat Serbia (losing against Croatia) in the bronze match by penalties.

The final saw an extremely demanding fight in which the Croatians could cope with the pressure better and they could seize the man advantage resulting in their victory.

Title defender Hungarian women's water polo team could make it to the semi-final where US team won 10-9 and later excelled Australians (beating Russia) in the final (6-5).