

SOFLO's Atkinson Wins, Breaks National Record At FINA World Cup

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South Florida Aquatic Club's Alia Atkinson bounced back with a vengeance on opening day of the FINA World Cup.

After a disappointing world championships in Barcelona last week, Atkinson, 24, a three-time Olympian for Jamaica, looked like her old self in the 100-meter breaststroke on Wednesday at the Eindhoven World Cup in the Netherlands.

During morning prelims, Atkinson, seeded first, broke her own national record in a lifetime-best 1:03.41, bettering her previous best of 1:03.80 and just off the 2009 World Cup record of 1:03.00 by Aussie Leisel Jones.

This puts Atkinson second on the all-time event list between American Jessica Hardy (1:03.30) and Lithuanian Ruta Meilutyte (1:03.52).

Hours later in the championship final, she won the event in 1:03.90 ahead of Rikke Moller Pedersen of Denmark in 1:04.11 and pocketed \$1,500 for first.

Atkinson's start reaction time in prelims was 0.67 and in finals 0.64.

Pedersen, the second seed and world championship silver medalist in the 200-meter breaststroke, finished in 1:06.23.

“At world championships, she swam with the weight of the world on her, she wasn’t swimming for herself,” her longtime SOFLO coach Chris Anderson said from California where he is at the Speedo Junior Nationals with teenagers Melissa Marinheiro and Julien Pinon.

“Today she got back to the basic fundamentals. She got out there and swam her race. It was fun for her and she went a best time.

“The preparation and work she put in during the post-Olympic year has been great,” Anderson said. “She did the work she needed to do. Now she needs to accomplish her goals for herself.”

On Thursday Atkinson competes in the 50-meter breaststroke and 100-meter individual medley.

Two days later Atkinson will compete in Germany on the World Cup’s second stop.

Also in Wednesday’s action, three world records were broken.

Defending Cup series champion Katinka Hosszu broke the world record in the 200-meter individual medley in prelims in 2:04.39 and broke it again to win in finals in 2:03.20.

South African Chad Le Clos and Ranomi Kromowidjojo also broke world records. Le Clos broke the 200-meter butterfly record in 1:49.04. Kromowidjojo broke hers in the 50-meter freestyle in 23.24. Kromowidjojo is now the Olympic, World and World Cup champion.

The top three finishers earn \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500. For short course meters world records there is a \$10,000 bonus.

Other individual winners were:

Lauren Boyle, New Zealand, 800-meter freestyle, 8:01.22.

Daiya Seto, Japan, 400-meter individual medley, 4:00.37.

James Magnusson, Australia, 100-meter freestyle, 45.60.

Sarah Sjostrum, Sweden, 200-meter freestyle, 1:52.26.

Roland Schoeman, South Africa, 50-meter breaststroke, 25.86.

Jeanette Ottesen-Gray, Denmark, 100-meter butterfly, 55.97.

Ashley Delaney and Bobby Hurley, Australia, tie, 100-meter backstroke, 50.42.

Aya Terakawa, Japan, 50-meter backstroke, 26.20.

Yannick Agnel, France, 400-meter freestyle 3:37.75.

Daniel Gyurta, Hungary, 200-meter breaststroke, 2:01.44.

George Bovell, Trinidad and Tobago, 100-meter individual medley, 51.15.

Daryna Zevina, Ukraine, 200-meter backstroke, 2:02.04.

Steffen Deibler, South Africa, 50-meter butterfly, 22.17.

Germany, mixed 200-meter medley relay, 1:39.38.

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