

News Title: Jamaica's Alia Atkinson equals world record; 17 new world marks and counting

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Inspired stars raise the World Record tally to 17



Alia Atkinson from Jamaica knew she was close to the victory and for some seconds looked at the scoreboard, perhaps waiting to see her name next to number 2. When she realised that in fact she was aligned with number 1, she couldn't almost believe it: her expression after getting the gold in the women's 100m breaststroke says everything about the surprising outcome of the race. Swimming next to her, Ruta Meilutyte of Lithuania, the World Record (WR) holder in 1:02.36 and fastest of the semis in a Championships Record (CR) of 1:02.43, seemed to have the race under control, but gliding in excess in the last stroke, she allowed the triumph of the Jamaican star. In an equalled WR of 1:02.36, Atkinson won the first gold medal ever in the history of three Championships for her country, while Meilutyte got the silver in 1:02.46. On Day 2, the 50m breaststroke had finished in the reverse order, with the Lithuanian earning gold and Atkinson finishing second.

On the fourth day of the 12th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Doha, this was one of the highlights of the evening session, which registered four other World Records: after getting the gold and the best world mark in the 50m free, Florent Manaudou (FRA) was again imperial in the 50m backstroke, stopping the clock in 22.22, much faster than the 22.61 established by Peter Marshall (USA) in 2009. The French champion, also surprised with his time, didn't have much time to rest, qualifying some minutes later for the final of the 100m free with the third fastest time of the semis (behind Cesar Cielo and Joao de Lucca, from Brazil).

Katinka Hosszu (HUN) continued to impress, getting her fourth gold, accompanied by WR performance. After the 100m and 200m backstroke, and the 100m IM, the Magyar champion dominated the field in the 200m IM, touching home in a new global best of 2:01.86, improving her own WR (2:02.13) set in August 31 in Dubai (UAE) during the FINA/MASTBANK Swimming World Cup. With her two silver medals in the 200m butterfly and 400m IM, Hosszu is now the best female swimmer in Doha, confirming her status as dominator of the current short-course season, crowned by the recent award of FINA Best Female Swimmer of 2014.

In the first event of the day, the team of Russia improved their own WR (1:23.36) from 2013 in the men's 4x50m free relay, touching home in 1:22.60. Thanks to a very fast start from Vladimir Morozov (21.01), the Russian quartet always controlled the pace of the race, and his teammates - Evgeny Sedov, Oleg Tikhobaev and Sergei Fesikov - were very regular, never losing the first place. The minor medals in this new event at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) went to USA (silver) and Italy (bronze). In the mixed 4x50m free relay, also a premiere, the United States (Josh Schneider, Matt Grevers, Madison Kennedy and Abbey Weitzeil) also improved the WR of this recent event, earning gold in 1:28.57 and leaving the previous WR holders, Russia, with the silver.