

Alia Atkinson finishes fourth in 200 metre breaststroke at Pan Ams



Jamaica's Alia Atkinson finished 4th in the women's 200 metre breaststroke at the Pan Am Games on Wednesday night.

Atkinson, who led at the first 50 metres of the race with a split of 32.94, was not able to withstand the charge of the eventual podium party - Canadians Kierra Smith and Martha McCabe, and American Annie Lazor. Smith won in a new Games record, 2:24.38, with McCabe the Silver in 2:24.51 and Lazor the bronze in 2:26.23. Atkinson equaled her best performance at a Pan Am Games and also swam a season best 2:27.15. It also puts Atkinson under the Kazan 2015 World Championships A standard for the event of 2:28.12.

In the B final, Bahamian Laura Morley finished 6th in 2:42.99 and Bermudan national record holder Lisa Blackburn was 7th in 2:46.32

In the B finals of the men's 200 metre breaststroke, newly-crowned Bahamian senior national record holder, Dustin Tynes, went out slightly slower in the finals (1:05.30 compared to 1:05.20) than he did in the heats. He came back in the last 100 metres to finish 6th in 2:18.4, a tantalizing .01 off his hours-old record. Caribbean compatriot, Aruban Jordy Groters took his race out harder than he did (1:06.11 compared to 1:06.71) in the morning. That paid great dividends as he finished 8th in 2:18.55, smashing his old senior national record of 2:19.77 set in the same pool at the Canadian trials earlier this year.

Jamaica's USC-bound Timothy Wynter finished 6th in the 200 metre backstroke in 2:07.78 (split 1:02.06), just off his season best of 2:07.17 posted in the morning.

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Day 2 Preliminaries

The morning heats on Day 2 of the Pan Am Games saw Alia Atkinson qualifying for tonight's Championship final in the 200 metre breaststroke.

Atkinson, who is the national record holder for Jamaica, clocked a season best 2:28.86 to be sixth heading into the final. That is the best time the 3 time Olympian has done at these Games after registering 2:30.96 for 4th in 2011, 8th in 2007 in a time of 2:40.18 and 4th in the B final in 2003 in 2:45.49. It is also just off the Kazan World Championships A standard time of 2:28.12

Laura Morley of the Bahamas earned a spot in the B final when she clocked a season best of 2:40.28 for 13th. Joining her in the B final will be Bermudan national record holder Lisa Blackburn. Blackburn clocked a season best of 2:42.82 for 14th overall. Blackburn was 5th in the B final in 2011 in 2:44.86. She has actually won Silver in the event in 2003 in 2:31.52 but was representing Canada at the time. Izzy Joachim of St Vincent and the Grenadines will also be in the B finals after posting a time of 2:58.72 for 16th.

In the men's 200 metre breaststroke, Dustin Tynes of the Bahamas qualified for the B finals by breaking a nearly 15-year-old record set by 3 times Olympian Jeremy Knowles. Tynes clocked 2:18.13 to be 14th overall, bettering the senior national record of 2:20.31. His long time CARIFTA rival, Aruban Jordy Groters came close to breaking his own national record of 2:19.77, set at the Canadian trials earlier this year when he posted 2:20.40 for 16th. Bermudan national record holder Julian Fletcher was 17th in 2:20.97 off his best of 2:19.77 set this year. Corey Ollivere of Grenada was 2nd in 2:41.52. The best the region has done in the event in recent championships is 9th when Bradley Ally of Barbados won the B final in 2003 in a time of 2:21.60

In the 200 metre freestyle, Lani Cabrera was the region's best placed woman, clocking 2:07.41 for 17th overall. Aruban Olympian Danielle Van Den Berg was 18th in 2:08.49. Samantha Roberts of Antigua and Barbuda was 20th in 2:17.25. The best recent performances by the region in this event have come from Jamaica's Janelle Atkinson. Atkinson was 7th in 2003 in 2:03.27; she had won the Silver four years prior in a time of 2:01.11.

For the men in this event, the 2015 15-17 CARIFTA champion Alex Sobers was the highest placed. He clocked 1:53.11 to be 17th. Noah Mascoll-Gomes of Antigua and Barbuda continues to make great strides for his country in swimming as he set another national record. He clocked 1:55.56 to place 19th overall. Omar Adams of Guyana was 21st in 2:15.59. The region had a rich vein of form over the last three championships. In 2011, the Fraser brothers - Brett and Shaune - struck Gold and Silver respectively in 1:47.18 (the current Games Record) and 1:48.29. In 2007, Shaune won Silver in 2007 in Brazil in 1:48.95. Prior to that, George Bovell III of Trinidad and Tobago won Gold in 1:48.90.

In the 200 metre backstroke, Lara Butler of the Cayman Islands was 17th in 2:26.43. The best performance in recent Games came from the Bahamas in 2011 Mckayla Lightbourn who won the B final in 2:19.25.

For the men in the 200 metre backstroke, Jamaica's Timothy Wynter was the region's fastest, posting a personal best of 2:07.17 to be 17th overall. Wynter is now the fastest Jamaican in the event this season and edges closer to the national record of 2:06.54, held by Keanan Dols. Mathew Mays of the USVI was 18th in 2:08.56 while Chris Curtis of Barbados was 20th in 2:09.73.

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