

European Aquatics Championships, Rome (ITA), Day 4 – Summary

Steenbergen bags 5th medal, two more for Milak, Fiedina stands with 5 golds

Five titles went to five different countries on another thrilling day at the European Aquatics Championships in the Foro Italico. Hungary's Kristof Milak bagged a gold and a silver in an hour to stand with four medals after four days, while Marrit Steenbergen of the Netherlands added a fifth to her already magnificent tally, completing the 100-200m free double. Still, the best collection so far belongs to Ukraine's Martina Fiedina – she has amassed five titles, landing two more this afternoon. Italy's Giorgio Minisini won the men's solo event to earn his third win in Rome.

Swimming

Hungary's Kristof Milak faced the most gruelling day of his Rome run – and ended up with a gold as he retained his 100m fly title, and later he anchored the Hungarian 4x100m free relay to a silver medal with a 47.24 blast. Though he lagged a bit behind in the first 50m in the fly final, but came up with another monstrous second leg to win with ease, ahead of Switzerland's Noel Ponti and Poland's Jakub Majerski – the latter two clinched their country's first medals here respectively. In 10 minutes, Milak, the top qualifier from the morning, returned to set up another duel with David Popovici in the 200m free, but he ran out of gas for the last 50m and ended up in the 10th place – so their second clash is postponed. By the way, Popovici looked smooth one day after his out-of-Earth world record in the 100m free, advanced to the final with the only sub-1:45min effort.

James Wilby landed another title for the Brits, the first individual triumph here, as he outsmarted Matti Matson in the 200m breast and won by almost half a second. Though the Finn was stilly happy to become his country's third swimmer ever to claim medals at the three majors (Olympics, Worlds, Europeans). Veteran Luca Pizzini, aged 33, delivered a bronze to the Italians.

As for the ladies, Marrit Steenbergen enjoyed another golden outing – not a single day has passed so far where the speedy Dutch left the pool empty-handed. She had two golds and a bronze with the relays and after winning the 100m free, today she came first in the 200m. Britain's Freya Anderson staged a great finish, but she was 0.16sec shy of her rival at the wall, adding silver to her 100m free bronze (and she also has two relay medals). Germany's Isabel Gose, runner-up in the 800m free, finished third.

France's second gold medal also came in the backstroke: following the men's 200m a day earlier, Analia Pigree claimed gold in the 50m at her first long-course European in her first big final – not bad for a start. Italy's Silvia Scalia out-touched Maikee de Waard by the tiniest possible margin, 0.01sec – so the Dutch had another dash bronze as she was also third in the 50m fly.

Exceptionally, the home crowd had to wait till the last final to celebrate another Italian win. At least, that was never in danger as all four men of the hosts' 4x100m free relay posted blistering 47sec legs,

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which none of their rivals were capable of. Consequently, they won by a mile, by 1.93sec, ahead of the Hungarians and the Brits.

Artistic swimming

Three more finals produced the expected outcome on the penultimate day at the artistic swimming competition. The first-ever male solo free event saw the same two getting the highest scores as in the technical final: Italy's Giorgio Minisini doubled down the titles, Spain's Fernando Diaz got the silver and France's Quentin Rakotomalala earned the bronze. On a sidenote, Minisini dropped in his post-race comment that the judges were yet to adjust their assessment of the male-only competitions as they viewed and compared the routines to the women's top performers who had been in the business since long years.

Like Marta Fiedina, who offered another breath-taking performance to win the solo free title, ahead of Italy's Linda Cerruti and Austria's Vasiliki Alexandri – to copy the final ranks in the technical final.

And Ukraine went 6/6 in the female events soon, Fiedina&Co. finished atop in the free combination, Italy earned the silver here as well (this was their 5th among the women), and finally the Greeks could step onto the podium as well.

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