

Brave rookie Ariarne anchors Australia's 4x200 relay to bronze



Swimming Australia: July 28, 2017:

Highlights

- Bronze – Women's 4x200m freestyle relay, Madison Wilson, Kotuku Ngawati, Emma McKeon and Ariarne Titmus
- Commonwealth and Australian record set in the women's 50m Backstroke – Emily Seebohm, 27.37
- Cameron McEvoy 4th in 100m freestyle final
- Emily Seebohm 4th in 50m backstroke final

Australia's Medal Tally:

Gold – 0, Silver – 5, Bronze – 2

Australia's rich history in international relays continued tonight as the women's 4x200m freestyle team demonstrated true grit when the quartet of **Madison Wilson, Emma McKeon, Kotuku Ngawati** and **Ariarne Titmus** combined to bag the bronze medal in sensational style.



The unlikely team; made up of a backstroke specialist in Wilson (1:57.33), an all-rounder in McKeon (1:56.26), a medley swimmer in Ngawati (1:58.31) and a distance freestyle rookie in Titmus (1:56.61), banded together for some Aussie relay magic to overcome Russia and secure a place on the podium by just 0.08 of a second in 7:48.51.

Wilson led off in a personal best time for the team with McKeon, who has now medalled in every final she has raced in so far, in the water next, pushing through fatigue to keep the Aussies in the mix.

Wilson said it was a special moment for her and for the team.



“It was a really special moment, especially when Arnie was coming home over the Russian and I think my voice is so sore now because I was screaming and she said she could hear me on the turns!”

“I definitely didn’t think in the 4x200 I would ever be representing Australia so it is pretty special to be up on the podium,” she said.

Ngawati swam out of her skin in the third leg to hand over to Titmus and the rest, as they say, is history with the 16-year-old getting her hand to the wall to steal third place.

There is a lot of trust and belief instilled in the relay anchor leg and although on debut for Australia, swimming in her first ever international relay, Titmus took it all in her stride and bravely mowed down the final 50 metres to clinch the bronze medal, relegating Russia to fourth.

“I didn’t think that ever, being a distance swimmer, I’d ever be able to represent Australia in a relay with the depth that we have in our country in sprint freestyle, so to come away with a medal I’m just really excited and I’m happy that I could do a fast time and I think I rose to the occasion,” Titmus said.

"I knew I had a fast time in me, but I didn't think I could go that fast.

"Just the whole atmosphere out there and doing it with the team and just really wanting to pull your part in the group really helps you swim those fast times."



Sitting in fourth place with just 50 metres to go, Titmus had the tough task of trying to get Australia ahead.

Her Coach **Dean Boxall** had said to her before the race, "Just swim three good 50's and one great 50, three good 50's and one great 50," he repeated.

And boy, was her last 50m a great one!

"I knew I could swim over the top of her (Russia's Arina Openysheva) if I stuck to my plan," Titmus said post-race.

"At the 100m mark I was a bit behind and then on the third turn I could see her and I was just like, "come on!"

"I just really dug deep and I didn't breathe for like the last 15 metres because I didn't know where she was, but it looked pretty close with the time, so I'm really happy I could get my hand on the wall first."

The USA won gold in 7:43.39 with China second in 7:44.96.

The women's 50m backstroke final was another highlight on night five at the Duna Arena in Budapest with **Emily Seebohm** and **Holly Barratt** both ready to strike.

Seebohm was the quickest of the pair, setting a new Commonwealth and Australian record in the event to narrowly miss a medal in fourth place with a time of 27.37.

Seebohm eclipsed her previous personal best that was set in 2015 – the year she won dual world championships titles – a promising sign for her 200m backstroke and the women's medley relay still to come.

Barratt, swimming in her first world championship final, was seventh overall in 27.60.

Swimming Australia was delighted to have the Australian Dolphins Swim Team Patron, **Ms Gina Rinehart**, joining the team in Budapest for the 2017 FINA World Championships, as she was hosted by our President Mr John Bertrand AM last night and supported the Dolphins from the stands again tonight.

In other events...

Men's 100m freestyle Final

The men's 100m freestyle final was always going to be a quick one and it just wasn't Australia's night tonight.

With two young guns lining up behind the blocks in **Cameron McEvoy** (47.92) and **Jack Cartwright** (48.24) the pair were just off the pace and had to settle for fourth and seventh respectively.

McEvoy, who was the silver medallist in this event from 2015 was just out-touched by France's Mehdy Metella (47.89), missing a top three finish by just 0.03 of a second.

The gold medal went to the USA's Caeleb Dressel (47.17) with his teammate and Olympic gold medallist from 2012 Nathan Adrian picking up the silver in 47.87.

Men's 200m Breaststroke Semi-Final

Australia has long been looking for its answer to world champion breaststrokers **Brenton Rickard** and **Christian Sprenger** and it may well have unearthed their protégé in rookie **Matt Wilson**.



Wilson will move through as the seventh fastest qualifier for the final of the men's 200m breaststroke in a time of 2:08.64 after knocking almost a second off his personal best time.

Racing in his first major international final tomorrow night, the 18 year old can take some confidence from the fact that he is only the third ever Australian to dip under the 2:09 mark, joining the likes of Sprenger (2:07.31) and Rickard (2:07.89), who's fastest times were both set in the super-suit era of 2009.

Anton Chupkov (2:07.14) will swim from lane four as the favourite with a time of 2:07.14.

Women's 100m Freestyle Semi-Final

There is no doubt the women's 100m freestyle final tomorrow night will be one of the fastest ever following the speedy semi-finals on night five.

Both our Aussie sprinters are safely through with **Bronte Campbell** (53.04) fifth fastest and **Emma McKeon** eighth in 53.20.

Backing up after 11 races in five days, McKeon will be hoping to move up the ranks tomorrow night when she is refreshed and re-energised.

"I didn't think 53.2 would get in, but I'm glad it just snuck in," McKeon said.

If McKeon can sneak into the top three tomorrow night, it will be her sixth medal of the meet so far – an historic achievement.

Sweden's Sarah Sjostrom will be hard to beat, clocking the fastest time from the semi-final in 52.44 and with the top four swimmers all under 53 seconds, the fight for a place on the podium will be on.

Women's 200m Breaststroke Semi-Final

On the three-year anniversary of her Commonwealth Games gold in this event, Rio Olympian **Taylor McKeown** will move through as the third fastest qualifier for the women's 200m breaststroke final with an impressive time of 2:22.10.

"My first world championship 200m breaststroke final," McKeown excitedly announced.

After going in as the favourite to the final in Rio, McKeown is taking a more relaxed approach to the final tomorrow night and will be looking to go one better than her fourth place from 2016.

"Swimming from lane three there's no pressure on me, so fingers crossed I can have a little bit more left over and go out there and swim a PB.

"My training up until this meet has been great and I've been doing some really good European racing.

"I went 2:22 in Barcelona at the Mare Nostrum and that was completely un-tapered so that was a really good sign then that I was in form and then I PB'd in my 100 so, I'm feeling really confident," McKeown said.

Russia's Yuliya Effimova was the fastest from the semi-finals with a time of 2:21.49.

Men's 200m Backstroke Semi-Final

Both **Josh Beaver** (1:58.10) and **Mitch Larkin** (1:59.10) will miss a finals berth in the men's 200m backstroke after finishing a 12th and 15th respectively.

The boys are both in a transition phase after recently changing coaches and will be looking to build on these results through the four-year cycle.