

## European Aquatics Championships, Rome (ITA), Day 1 – Summary

### Razzetti claims first title, Hungary earn 100<sup>th</sup> gold

As a fitting start, Italy's Alberto Razzetti claimed the first title on offer at the European Aquatics Championships in Rome by winning the 400m IM. The Netherlands did a brilliant job in the women's 4x200m free to clinch a historical first-ever gold in this event, while the Hungarians, thanks to Kristof Milak's blast in the anchor leg, won the men's relay and the nation's 100<sup>th</sup> European Championship gold in swimming. Ukraine also took a golden start in artistic swimming, finishing atop in the team technical event.

#### *Swimming*

The first individual final of the day turned into an Italy v Hungary battle where the home swimmers took the upper hands at the end. Alberto Razzetti managed to outlast 3-time champion David Verraszto, the second oldest swimmer in the championship – while Pier Andrea Mateazzi pipped Hubert Kos for the bronze, giving a 1-3 finish for the home nation.

In the newly shaped programme, the 4x200m free relays were on show – in the past, the 4x100m free concluded the opening day – and they brought tremendous excitements. In the women's event it was a duel between the Netherlands and Great Britain but with a special flavour as the Brits swam on lane 1.

The lead was constantly changing over the first three legs but Marrit Steenbergen's speed over the anchor leg was too much for Freya Anderson thus the Dutch landed their first-ever gold in this event. Hungary secured a bronze and medal No. 97 for Katinka Hosszu who swam together with a couple of youngsters who were not even born when she had competed in her first junior Europeans.

The men's final was a true thriller. The Swiss led after the first leg, then the French stormed in front and held on even after 600m, enjoying an almost full second advantage ahead of the Italians and the Hungarians. However, there came Kristof Milak and left no chance for the others. The butterfly king showed he had speed for the freestyle too, his 1:44.42min split decided everything, he gained a full second on the Italians and almost 2.5 on the French to secure Hungary's 100<sup>th</sup> European Championship gold medal.

This was not the first time for Milak, Nemeth, Hollo and Marton to achieve something big together: back in 2017 the same four had stunned the Americans in Indianapolis to win this relay at the junior Worlds by 0.01sec. Five years later it was time for a reunion and it ended well once more to give the Magyars their first title in this relay since 1954.

#### *Artistic swimming*

Ukraine skipped that event at the World Championships in June but now they were back and left no doubt whose routine was the best in the team technical final. The Italians went through some nerve-

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wrecking moments as they swam for second and needed to wait till the end to see if they could keep the first or the second place.

The Ukrainians – training in Italy since the war broke out – got ahead of them but apart from this, no one else offered a better performance, so the home team could happily wave to the enthusiastic crowd with the silver medals around their necks, while France earned the bronze.

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