

PREVIEW – ARTISTIC SWIMMING

World of Artistic Swimming on the move – Ukraine, Italy, Greece and Austria in the medal hunt – 26 Federations to participate – Première of Men’s solo events

At the European Championships in Glasgow 2018 four federations shared the medals in nine competitions, two – Russia (8) and Ukraine (1) – swept the golds. Three years later, at the following edition in Budapest 2021, altogether nine different nations won at least one medal, back then in ten events. This is an indication that the landscape of Artistic Swimming – although and until now still dominated by Russian athletes – is changing.

And in Rome more changes are due – first of all, a total of 12 titles will be at stake at the upcoming European Championships. Since 2016, three titles were added in the Technical Routines (Solo, Duet and Team), additionally, since the Europeans in London, the Mixed Duet has become a constant feature of the programme. Budapest 2021 celebrated the debut of the Highlight competition while Rome 2022 will witness the première of the Men’s solo events (Free and Routine). This is history in the making: at senior level no major international meet included a male-only competition. The contests will be concluded with a spectacular and highly attractive Gala, to be staged on the day of a special Italian holiday, Ferragosto (Monday, August 15).

Ukraine medal contender No. 1 ahead of local heroes from Italy

As Russia, the dominating nation in the past years, is not competing, the other powerhouses like Ukraine, Italy, Greece will battle for the medals this time (Spain opted to skip the women events). The absence of the best performers will be felt for sure as Russia’s dominance seemed to be unbreakable for quite a while. In the Olympic events (duet, team) they’ve never been bettered at the European Championships since 1991 and apart from a couple of silvers in solo (2002, 2004, 2008), they swept all titles in all events they entered (the World Championships were no different: a couple of losses in solo between 2001 and 2005, a rare silver in duet in 2001, then in the mixed duet technical in 2015 and 2017, otherwise only winning).

In Budapest 2021, Ukraine celebrated victories in four events as well as their seventh ever gold medal in the European Championships’ history. With four gold and four silver medals, they finished second in the medal table behind Russia (6-0-0). Four medals went to Spain (three silver, one bronze) and three to Greece (two silver, one bronze).

Headed by Marta Fiedina, the most decorated athlete at the last edition in Budapest with 8 medals (four golds, four silvers), the Ukrainians are set to achieve something big in Rome. Most of the team are training in Italy since the war broke out so they could feel themselves at home in the Foro Italico.

Host Italy could be considered Number 2. behind Ukraine. The Italians bagged five medals at the World Championships, including two titles delivered by their brilliant mixed duet of Giorgio Minisini and Lucrezia Ruggiero. Obviously, they will compete in all disciplines on home soil. Spain sends a small team of three, though they will be very competitive in the Men’s Solo and in the Mixed Duet. Team Greece is headed by Evangelia Platanioti, who claimed bronze medals in the solo events in Budapest this June.

Austria’s Alexandri triplets in the footsteps of Worisch, Edinger and Brandl

Whereas Belarus (one silver, two bronze), Hungary and Israel (one bronze each) appeared on the

European medal table for the first time ever in 2021, Austria left an especially strong impression in the past years. With two bronze medals in the duet competition, Anna-Maria and Eirini Alexandri successfully followed the footsteps of compatriots Alexandra Worisch, Eva-Maria Edinger and Nadine Brandl.

The now 56-year-old Worisch not only won Duet gold (together with Eva-Maria Edinger) at the 1985 European Championships in Sofia/BUL, but also had Solo silvers from 1981 (Split) and 1987 (Strasbourg). Worisch's niece Nadine Brandl, now living in the US, was a top ten synchro swimmer during the first decade of 2000, too. Recently, thanks to their impressive performances, Anna-Maria and Eirini Alexandri have inspired not only the spectators but also the judges. At the 2022 Worlds five weeks ago in Budapest, they confirmed their elevated status by clinching bronzes in the Duet free and technical routines.

The top favourites in the duet events are also twins, Marina and Vasalina Aleksiiiva from Ukraine. They returned with two silver medals from the World Championships, where most probably for the first time in universal sport history, the podium was occupied by three twins: the Wang sisters from China won both titles, ahead of the Alekiiivas and the Alexandris. Italy's Linda Cerrutti and Costanza Ferro are definitely capable of claiming a medal, too.

Anna-Maria and Eirini Alexandri's triplet sister Vasiliki – who finished fifth in the Solo Free and Technical at the Worlds in Budapest – will also compete in Rome in both Solo events, where Ukrainian world silver medallist Marta Fiedina is undoubtedly the top favourite. World bronze medallist Evangelia Platanioti from Greece and Italy's Linda Cerrutti (2-time World 4th) might be her strongest challengers.

Mixed Duet: Word Champions Minisini/Ruggiero “on fire” – Premiere for the men's solo events

The Mixed Duet, which celebrated its première at the 2015 Worlds in Kazan, has quickly become an attractive addition to the schedule at European Championships as well. Since the European debut in London 2016, Russia has set the tone with Aleksandr Maltsev and his respective partners Mikhaela Kalancha, Maya Gurbanberdieva and Olesia Platonova.

In Rome, the Italian Mixed Duet will be the top favourite. Giorgio Minisini, who missed the last edition 2021 in Budapest due to a last-minute positive Covid-test, is seeking his first European title – with two golds from the Worlds already under his belt, Minisini is all set to keep both golds at home. The strongest challengers might be the Catalan duo Pau Ribes and Emma Garcia and the Slovakian siblings Silvia and Jozef Solymosy.

Rome will also be site of the première of the men's solo event. Athletes from six nations entered and will make it into the books of history in this new event, headed by 18-year-old Fernando Diaz from Spain, who won the Super Final of the FINA Artistic Swimming World Series last May in Athens, Greece.

Team titles: Ukraine on top – possible podium finishes for Italy and Greece?

The team events also offer a good opportunity for some nations to step on to the podium for the first time. Ukraine will go all-in, they have entered both team events as well as the Combination and Highlight – which offers them a good opportunity to further improve their medal tally with additional

golds. For the first time in years, Spain skips the team events as well as the women’s solo and duet, leaving Italy and Greece a fine chance to fill the spots on the podium.

A total of 26 LEN Member Federations will participate in the 12 events, to be staged in the temporary pool in the famous Nicola Pietrangeli Stadium. This is one of the well-known tennis courts of the top-tier “Italian International Open” that bears the name of one of the greatest Italian tennis players of all times, world No. 3 in the 1959 and 1960 rankings as well as Roland Garros winner in both years.

Indeed, using a temporary pool while hosting a major aquatic event started here in Rome – back in 1994, at the 7th FINA World Championships, the Italians amazed many by setting up a temporary infrastructure at one of the tennis courts to stage the games of the women’s water polo tournaments. This launched a new era in aquatics as major events could become more compact – fifteen years later, at the 2009 edition of the Worlds, the Pietrangeli Stadium was the site of the synchro events while the giant centre court hosted the water polo tournaments.

The participating **26 Federations in Rome**: AUT – Austria, BEL – Belgium, BUL – Bulgaria, CZE – Czech Republic, DEN – Denmark, ESP – Spain, FIN – Finland, FRA – France, GBR – Great Britain, GEO – Georgia, GER – Germany, GRE – Greece, HUN- Hungary, ISR – Israel, ITA – Italy, MLT – Malta, NED – Netherlands, POR – Portugal, SMR – San Marino, SLO – Slovenia, SRB – Serbia, SUI – Switzerland, SVK – Slovakia, SWE – Sweden, TUR – Turkey, UKR – Ukraine

COMPETITION SCHEDULE



ARTISTIC SWIMMING



DAY	1	2	3	4	5
	Thursday 11/08/2022	Friday 12/08/2022	Saturday 13/08/2022	Sunday 14/08/2022	Monday 15/08/2022
RACE	MORNING 09.30 - 11.00	MORNING 09.30 - 11.30	MORNING 09.30 - 11.00	MORNING 09.30 - 11.30	MORNING 09.30 - 12.00
	Solo Free Preliminary Women	Duet Free Preliminary Women	Team Free Preliminary Women	Solo Free Final Women	Duet Technical Final Women
	EVENING 15.00 - 16.30	EVENING 15.00 - 17.30	EVENING 15.00 - 17.00	Male Solo Free Final	Mixed Duet Technical Final
	Team Technical Final Women	Solo Technical Final Women	Duet Free Final Women	Solo Free Medal Ceremony Women	Duet Technical Medal Ceremony Women
	Team Technical Medal Ceremony Women	Male Solo Technical Final	Mixed Duet Free Final	Male Solo Free Medal Ceremony	Mixed Duet Technical Medal Ceremony
		Highlights Final Women	Duet Free Medal Ceremony Women	EVENING 15.00 - 16.30	EVENING 15.00 - 18.00
		Solo Technical Medal Ceremony Women	Mixed Duet Free Medal Ceremony	Combination Final Women	Team Free Final Women
		Male Solo Technical Medal Ceremony		Combination Medal Ceremony Women	Team Free Medal Ceremony Women
		Highlights Medal Ceremony Women			Gala Event

Local time

Artistic Swimming timing vers. 1.1