



Press release

PR41-12

Same as in Beijing 2008:

13 gold medals for European athletes at the Olympic Games in London

Luxembourg (pps) Athletes from LEN affiliated member Federations won altogether **39 (13 gold, 15 silver and 11 bronze)** of the 138 possible medals at the XXX. Summer Olympic Games in London – twenty-five in Swimming, three in Open Water Swimming and Diving, four in Synchronised Swimming and Water Polo each. With these medals European athletes showed almost the same level of performance as at the 2008 Olympics: in Beijing four years ago, European athletes had achieved 13 gold, 18 silver and 16 bronze medals (a total of 47) in the five aquatic disciplines.

“During the European Swimming Championships in Debrecen, Hungary I predicted 10 gold medals for the Europeans, so if you take this as basis definitely we performed well and as expected. Nevertheless, one can do always better and of course aims for better. If we look at the under achievements of some of our Federations certainly we can state that there were chances to do better, and in the same time perhaps we need to make an in-deep analysis why it happened as it happened, and find ways for improvement for Rio 2016”, said LEN President Nory Kruchten of Luxembourg after the conclusion of the Games.

Swimming: France top European swimming nation behind the USA and China

Among the 17 Federations represented in the swimming medal table of the XXX. Olympic Games 2012 in London, athletes from eight European Federations won a total of 25 medals (8 gold - 10 silver - 7 bronze). In Beijing, swimmers from twelve European Federations earned 26 medals (7-10-9). The rankings in London were clearly dominated by the swimmers from the United States who collected a total of 30 medals (16-8-6) ahead of China (5-2-3 = 10). On third place: France. They not only advanced to the “European No. 1 Swimming Spot” by winning four gold, two silver and one bronze medal, but they also replaced the British hosts, who were the best European nation in 2008 (2-0-1). Further “European gold medals” at the London Aquatic Centre went to the Netherlands (2), Hungary and Lithuania (1 each).



Altogether 36 male and 46 female European swimmers reached the finals in the 26 men’s and women’s individual events.



The British hosts – as some other nations too – failed to fulfill expectations: 2008 Olympic Champion Rebecca Adlington (400m and 800m freestyle) as well as Italy’s Federica Pellegrini (200m freestyle) were not able to defend their titles. Whereas Adlington took at



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least two bronze medals, Pellegrini only finished fifth in the 200m and 400m freestyle. Italy as well as Germany had to leave London without any swimming medal.

Especially the swimmers from Germany, top nation in Europe for many years and runner-up behind Hungary (9-10-7) in the medal rankings at the 31st European Swimming Championships in Debrecen in May (8-6-3), had to cope with numerous disappointments in London: for the first time in eighty years they returned home without a single medal. Two fourth places by the 2008 double Olympic Champion Britta Steffen (50m freestyle) and Steffen Deibler (100m butterfly) as well as one fifth place by 200m and 400m freestyle World record holder Paul Biedermann (200m freestyle) were the best results.

In Athens in 2004 and in Beijing in 2008, European swimmers had claimed the top of the Olympic podium seven times. In London they earned eight top podiums: Hungarian **Daniel Gyurta**, who not only won Olympic gold in the 200m breaststroke but set a new World record in 2:07.28 min. It needs to be mentioned that as a 15-year-old, Gyurta had surprisingly earned an Olympic silver medal at the 2004 Games in Athens. Freestyle sprinter **Ranomi Kromowidjojo** from the Netherlands followed in the footsteps of Germany's Britta Steffen when she claimed gold in the 50m, as well as in the 100m freestyle.

Apart from the title in the 4x100m freestyle relay, three individual gold medals went to France: **Yannick Agnel** confirmed his favorite status, winning the 200m freestyle; **Camille Muffat** succeeded Great Britain's Rebecca Adlington in the 400m freestyle. One of the most surprising gold medals went to **Florent Manaudou**, younger brother of 2004 three-time Olympic medalist Laure Manaudou (gold 400m freestyle, silver 800m freestyle, bronze 100m backstroke) in the men's 50m freestyle. Fifteen years old teenager **Ruta Meilutyte** from Lithuania pulled off another big surprise when she won the 100m breaststroke, setting up a new European record already in the semis (1:05.21). It was the first ever Olympic gold in swimming for Lithuania.

The French quartet (**Amaury Levaux, Fabien Gilot, Clement Lefert, Yannick Agnel**) claimed gold in the 4x100m freestyle relay and thus took "revenge" for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing when they were defeated by the USA with a winning margin of only eight hundredths of seconds. The relay events were clearly dominated by US swimmers who took four of the altogether six gold medals.

Apart from Gyurta and Meilutyte, another European record was set by Russia's **Yulyia Efimova** when she came third in the 200m breaststroke, setting a time of 2:20.92 min. Yannick Agnel and Ranomi Kromowidjojo turned out to be the most successful European swimmers in London, each winning two gold and one silver medal.



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Open Water: First Open Water gold for Mellouli / Three medals to European swimmers

In Beijing the Europeans dominated the Open Water Swimming première when they made a clean sweep by winning all six medals. In London three medals – one gold, one silver and one bronze - went to European swimmers. It came as a surprise when Hungary's **Eva Risztov** won Olympic gold in the women's 10km in 1:57:38.2 hrs, ahead of American Haley Anderson. Bronze went to the 2011 European Champion **Martina Grimaldi** of Italy. Europe's female Open Water swimmers achieved a total of nine top ten finishes, thus clearly demonstrating their strength in this discipline. Crowd favourite **Keri-Anne Payne** from Great Britain, silver medallist at the 2008 Olympic Games as well as 2009 and 2011 World Champion, however had to cope with a fourth place. She missed the podium by just narrow 0.4 seconds.

After bronze in Beijing, **Thomas Lurz** (Germany) had set his sights on gold. In the end he had to settle for silver. The 10-time record World Champion, with now 26 international medals and the most successful Open Water swimmer, was only defeated by Oussama Mellouli, who achieved his second Olympic victory after the 2008 gold in the pool (1500m freestyle). The Tunisian claimed the podium's top spot by a winning margin of 3.4 seconds in 1:49.55.1 hrs, ahead of Lurz and Canadian Richard Weinberger as well as 2011 World Champion **Spyridon Gianniotis** of Greece on fourth place. Europe's male Open Water swimmers achieved a total of seven top ten finishes.

Synchronised Swimming: Russia continues to dominate in Synchronized Swimming

The Europeans again dominated the two events in Synchronised Swimming – Duet and Team. As expected, both gold medals went to Russia. The title in the team event (197.030 points – technical 98.100, free 98.930) was Russia's fourth consecutive Olympic victory since the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000. Only in Atlanta in 1996 the Russian girls had failed to win Olympic gold (finishing fourth).

Additionally, **Natalia Ishchenko/Svetlana Romashina** won the Duet competition and thus succeeded their compatriots Anastasia Davydova/Anastasia Ermakova, 2004 and 2008 Olympic Champions. It was also the first Olympic gold medals that Ishchenko/Romashina claimed together, but the fourth consecutive Duet title for Russia at Olympic Games.

The silver and bronze medals were divided among Spain and China. Silver in the Duet went to the Spaniards Andrea Fuentes/Ona Carbonell, ahead of the Chinese Xuechen Huang/Ou Liu. China took second place in the Team event, while Spain claimed the bronze medal.



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Diving: Daley's bronze medal valued like gold / China defeated twice

Once more the Olympic Diving events were dominated by the Chinese athletes, who collected 10 (6-3-1) of the altogether 24 medals. In 2008, the Chinese landslide victory in Diving was only stopped in one of the eight events by Australian Matthew Mitchum, winning the men's 10m Platform. In London, "non-Chinese" divers caught up a bit and eventually claimed two gold medals: **Ilya Zakharov** achieved gold in the 3m Springboard event thus surprising China's Kai Qin and World Champion Chong He, scoring an impressive 555.90 points. Together with his compatriot Evgeny Kuznetsov the Russian also earned silver in the 3m Synchronized event.

David Boudia won the first 10m Platform gold for the USA, since Greg Louganis in 1988 with a "last-dive victory", defeating 2011 World Champion Bo Qiu from China. But it was the bronze medal of Great Britain's "local hero" **Thomas Daley** in the 10m Platform event on the last evening of the diving events that was celebrated by an enthusiastic crowd as if it was gold. 18-year old Daley, 2009 World as well as 2008 and 2012 European Champion, is one of the biggest sports stars in his country.

Germany, in the past years one of the strongest European Diving nations and winner of two Olympic medals in 2008, failed to fulfil the high expectations. Patrick Hausding, 2008 Olympic silver medallist in the 10m Synchro event, missed a medal when he finished fourth in the 3m Springboard. Italy's Tania Cagnotto also failed twice to earn a podium spot – she finished fourth in the 3m Springboard event and in the Synchronized 3m together with compatriot Francesca Dallapè.

European powerhouses dominate men's Water Polo / Spanish women a pleasant surprise

All medals in the men's Olympic Water Polo tournament went to European teams and what is even more impressive: six teams from Europe finished on the first six places. Croatia, 1996 Olympic silver medalist and 2007 World Champion, only ninth at the 2012 European Championships in Eindhoven, defeated Italy 8-6 in the final. For the record, Italy is a three-time Olympic, World and European Champion respectively. Croatia's first Olympic gold was the cherry on the cake of a perfect tournament as they remained unbeaten in their eight successive matches.

In a "remake" of the 2012 European Championship final Serbia claimed - like in Beijing in 2008 - the bronze medal ahead of Montenegro in a close 12-11 game and especially after a



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strong fourth quarter. Hungary, defending champion as well as Olympic record winner with nine gold medals missed the podium after being defeated 9-11 by Italy in the quarter-final.

After 2008 Olympic Champion Netherlands as well as the 2011 World Champion Greece failed to qualify for the Women's tournament in London and 2012 European Champion Italy did not reach the semi-finals, it was up to Hungary and Spain to rescue Europe's honour. 2012 European fifth-placed Spain surprisingly won their semi-final against Hungary 10-9. In the final, however, the young Spanish squad, did not stand a chance when they had to face USA who managed their first gold at Olympic Games after two silver and one bronze medal. Hungary lost the third place match against Australia 11-13.

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