

## Canada's first two medals come in the pool



BANGKOK, Thailand (CIS) - Canada's swim team opened and closed Friday's finals at the Thammasat University Aquatic Centre with a bang, winning the country's first two medals of the 2007 Summer Universiade.

Mackenzie Downing (UVic) put an exclamation point on Canada's first medal-table appearance, winning the women's 100-metre butterfly in Canadian-record time. The men's 4x100 free relay team of Richard Hortness of Medicine Hat, Alta. (UNLV), Brian Johns of Richmond, B.C. (UBC), Chad Hankewich of Saskatoon (U of Calgary) and Darryl Rudolf of Tsawwassen, B.C. (UBC), capped off the night with a gutsy silver-medal performance.

Downing, the Whitehorse native who lives and trains in Victoria, made the turn in fourth and cranked it up in the final 50 metres to touch first in 58.88 seconds, one-hundredth quicker than the previous Canadian record, held Audrey Lacroix of Montreal (U of Montreal). Lacroix just missed the podium, finishing fourth in 59.48.

"It was a really good race for me," said Downing, who entered the final ranked first. "This morning, I went out a little bit too hard because I was nervous, and tonight I just wanted to go out and make the first 50 feel real easy. It did, so I just came off that wall and tried to bring it home as hard as I could."

The 20-year-old is one of Canada's rising stars, coming off a sweep of the butterfly events at the recent Canadian senior nationals. She is still working on her showmanship, however, forgoing any sort of reaction at the finish for a more internal celebration.

"I was really happy," she said, "but I was just so relieved. I was so nervous coming into it and when I looked up at the clock a wave of relief just washed over me."

The men's relay team came together in a big way Friday, charging back from eighth after 100 metres to claim silver in 3:18.57. The U.S. won in a Universiade-record time of 3:16.06, while Russia took bronze in 3:18.73.



"All day today we've pretty much done everything together, eaten breakfast and lunch together," said Rudolf, who smashed his personal-best relay leg with a 49.1-second split. "It's all about coming together as a team. We wanted to get a medal, but that wasn't the be-all and end-all for us. Getting in there for a silver is amazing for the four of us."

None of the four are part of Canada's A relay team, making their time even more impressive. They weren't far off the Canadian record of 3:15.74. "They should be worried," Rudolf said playfully. "We're not too far off with this ragtag group, so we're pretty excited."

Canada almost had two more medals in the water. Joining Lacroix as a fourth-place finisher was Jen Carroll of Trois-Rivieres, Que., who clocked 29.20 in the 50 backstroke. Lacroix later placed eighth in the 100 freestyle in 56.51, while Seanna Mitchell of Manotick, Ont. (U of Calgary) was 15th in that event.

Personal bests continued to fall on Day 2 in the pool, including Annamay Pierse of Edmonton placing fifth in the 200 individual medley in 2:14.61. Michelle Landry of North Vancouver was ninth in that event in 2:16.72, while other PBs were Kelly Stefanyshyn of Winnipeg in the 50 back (29.44, 13th), Sandy Lockhart of Vancouver in the 800 freestyle (8:23.13, 16th) and Hortness in the lead leg of the 4x100 free relay preliminaries (50.69).

Day 3 in the pool could provide more podium moments with Canadian record holders Johns and Pierse swimming the 200 IM and 200 breast, respectively. Other events are the women's 400 free, men's 100 breast, men's 200 IM and women's 4x200 relay.