

Swimming: Armstrong Wins Silver Medal After Confusion At World Championships



The United States had two winners of the 50m backstroke at the world swimming championships in Budapest, Hungary. After some confusion, Justin Ress was confirmed as the gold medal recipient and Ohio State's Hunter Armstrong handed over the medal.

Ress won the event in 24.12 seconds, but his celebration ended promptly when the judges disqualified him for being submerged at the finish. Armstrong, who finished .02 seconds behind, was awarded the win. Poland's Ksawert Masiuk and Italy's Thomas Ceccon won the silver and bronze medals.

However, officials gathered after the award ceremony and overturned Ress' disqualification, meaning Ress won gold, Armstrong silver and Masiuk bronze.

Despite losing his gold medal, Armstrong celebrated with Ress after hearing the news. He believed Ress was deserving of the award and didn't want to accept his title if it meant Ress couldn't experience the same happiness.

"I would have rather taken second and had him with me than having me get the title with the DQ," Armstrong told swimswam.com after the event. "That's now how I wanted it. I was just incredibly proud of him. He's just an amazing athlete, a great talent, and completely raw. He's capable of so much. To have that taken away from him, it sucks."

Armstrong finished .02 seconds behind Ress in the semifinals and finals. It was the second gold medal of the week for Ress, who also helped the Americans win the 4x100m free. Ress said he felt overwhelmed by the news that he had been disqualified. He felt a weight lifted off of him when Armstrong handed him the gold medal for the 50m backstroke.

"It was shocking the whole time," Ress said. "Twenty minutes. I was just in the chair in the team room, just paralyzed, shocked I got DQ'ed. And then, obviously, the overturns rarely happen, so I pretty much lost all hope."

United States team manager Lindsay Mintenko pushed the officials to review their decision, a request they obliged. The officials showed her the frame-by-frame footage of Ress' finish to back up their case. But after significant deliberation, the officials awarded Ress with the win.

Armstrong said he gladly handed over the medal to his teammate and looks forward to competing with and against Rens in the future. For now, he's focused on representing the United States in the best way possible, one race at a time.