

Structure of the sport

Synchronised swimming entered global competition, with the United States, Canada and Japan competing at the inaugural FINA World Championships in Belgrade in 1973. It had previously featured at the Pan-American Games of 1955, 1963 and 1971.

The World Cup was introduced in 1979, with the first edition held in Tokyo. Synchronised swimming became a full Olympic sport in 1984 at the Los Angeles Games. An annual World Trophy, in which marks are awarded only for artistic impression (not for technical merit), was introduced in 2006, the first edition held in Moscow. Junior World Championships were first held in 1989 in Cali, Colombia.

In the Olympics, solo and duet were contested in 1984, 1988 and 1992. They were both dropped and replaced by a team event in 1996. Duet returned alongside the team event in 2000.

In the World Championships, the events from 1973 to 2001 consisted of solo, duet and team. A free routine combination, comprising elements of solo, duet and team, was added in 2003 and renamed 'free combination' in 2005. The solo, duet and team events were split in 2007, with medals awarded for both technical and free routines in all three disciplines. This, with the free combination, increased the programme to seven events.

THE EVENTS

Olympic Games:

Solo: 1984, 1988, 1992

Duet: 1984, 1988, 1992, 2000, 2004, 2008

Team: 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008.

World Championships:

Solo, Duet and Team: 1973, 1975, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2001

Solo, Duet, Team, Free Routine Combination: 2003

Solo, Duet, Team, Free Combination: 2005

Solo Technical Routine, Solo Free Routine, Duet Technical Routine, Duet Free Routine, Team Technical Routine, Team Free Routine, Free Combination: 2007.

World Cup:

Solo, Duet and Team: 1979, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2002

Solo, Duet, Team and Free Combination: 2006.

A World Cup 'B' competition was held in Cairo in 2000.

World Trophy:

Duet, Team and Free Combination (marks only for artistic impression, combined from the three events to decide winning nation): 2006, 2007, 2008.

Junior World Championships: 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008.



GUIDE TO SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING

The judging process:

1. **Technical Routine:** Involves required technical elements which must be performed in series. Teams choose their own music and choreography but cannot perform elements out of order. Technical Routine has replaced Compulsory Figures in senior competition.
 2. **Free Routine:** No restrictions on music, choreography and elements.
 3. **Judging:** A panel of 10 judges awards scores from 0 to 10 in increments of one tenth of a point (0.1). Five evaluate Technical Merit and five evaluate Artistic Impression.
 4. **Technical Merit:**
 - a. Execution: Perfection of swimming strokes, propulsion techniques, figures, patterns and transitions.
 - b. Synchronisation: Ability to match one with the other and move with the music.
 - c. Difficulty: Height of movements above the water, complexity and multiplicity of movements, strength required, length of time movements require and complexity of synchronisation.
 5. **Artistic Impression:**
 - a. Choreography: Variety and creativity of movements, transitions, fluidity, patterns and pool usage.
 - b. Music Interpretation: Use of movement to interpret the music, its dynamics and rhythms.
 - c. Manner of Presentation: Poise with which routine is presented, ability to communicate through the choreography and seeming effortlessness of performance.
 6. **Scoring:** Highest and lowest scores in each category (Technical Merit and Artistic Impression) cancelled and remaining scores averaged. Technical Merit and Artistic Impression totals multiplied by five and added together (maximum score: 100).
 7. **Final result:** Combined total of 50 per cent of Free Routine score and 50 per cent of Technical Routine score.
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