



FÉDÉRATION
INTERNATIONALE
DE NATATION

Published on *fina.org* - Official FINA website (<https://www.fina.org>)

FINA holds “FINA Swim Sport Entertainment” meeting in Indianapolis

FINA Communications Department

FINA Executive Director Cornel Marculescu, FINA Vice President Dale Neuburger and FINA Technical Swimming Committee Chairwoman Carol Zaleski and Honorary Secretary Haoran Yuan, together with USA Swimming senior management, held a meeting this morning, June 1, in Indianapolis (USA) on the last day of the third and final leg of the

FINA Champions Swim Series 2019 [1].

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss in-depth how to further improve and develop swimming to make it an attractive and entertaining product which drives fans, sponsors and spectators’ engagement in the long run.

In addition, the FINA Champions Swim Series 2020 was on the agenda of this productive meeting as dates and hosts are to be decided according to the athletes’ busy schedule in an Olympic year.

Twenty athletes from various nationalities (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden Ukraine and USA), as well as FINA Athletes Committee Members Stavroula Kozompoli and Ryan Pini attended the meeting this morning.

Early morning discussions focused on showcasing swimming in a different way to show the value of this sport to the world as FINA is looking at giving swimming additional visibility outside the Olympics, the World Championships and the Swimming World Cup. Creating a product that broadcasters want to display globally to grasp the public’s interest was the main topic.



Later, options to organise next year's Champions Swim Series were debated. The possibility to host this highly-coveted new competition at the end of January or at the beginning of February 2020 in two close locations (same continent) and within a timeframe of a week only stood out from the exchanges between the athletes and FINA.

"Nowadays, sport has to adjust to the ever-changing sports business environment. Swimming has to adapt to the new landscape and follow the trends to stay a top tier sport and continue to attract fans and spectators. Without our stars, people have no interest in our sport. We have to show the great value of our sport and draw attention to the great champions and personalities we have within our sport by creating interesting and catchy stories."

Mr Marculescu highlighted that FINA is continuously investing into the sport through development programmes and new events such as the Champions Swim Series.

"We have invested more than USD 40M in new development programmes and we are always looking for more partners and sponsors to support our initiatives."

During the meeting, athletes were able to give their valuable input.

Among those expressing their opinion were Ukraine's Andriy Govorov and Belgium's Peter Timmers.

"We are here to show the world who we are. It is a really nice and respectful step forward." Govorov said about the Champions Swim Series. "The four-lane set up is much more efficient."

"With the Olympic season next year we have to be careful when we organise the second edition of the event. I think end of January / February would be a good time for all of us. After the Olympics, the athletes will want to take a break."

Peter Timmers added to this: "February is a good month to do this, we all agree. The meets should be close to each others because we don't want to travel too much in an Olympic trial. Maybe you can do 2020 in Europe, 2021 in Asia, 2022 in America for example."

"It is important to have the meets in a very short period of time to avoid missing training so much. It also helps preventing jet lag. If you could keep it into one travel that would be great." Ranomi Kromowidjoho (NED) bounced back, while Sarah Sjöström (SWE) agreed with all of them.

Cody Miller of the USA came up with the idea of conducting a survey.

“I would suggest to send out a survey for all the athletes to find out the best time to organise this event. And also, to check which places the athletes want to go to. 2020 will be filled with Olympic trials so it will be tricky to find a suitable time.”

He also said: “The event here was well run. This is how we will make swimming more attractive. We need more of that. Only four athletes is less information for people to focus on. Hopefully in the years to come there is more money to drive more interested, because as much as I hate it, money drives sport. The Series is definitely a step in the right direction. We are being listened to.”

Athletes Committee Member Pini emphasised that the athletes voice and feedback has been taken into serious consideration and that changes have actually been put in place.

“Initially we tried to gather feedback at the Swimming World Cup and it helped us develop this new competition. Your feedback is really important and taking into consideration for improvement. Make your opinion heard, talk to us! We are here to make it better for you guys.”

The meeting concluded on a positive note and dialogue remained open as discussions will continue in Gwangju, Korea, in July.
