OPEN WATER SWIMMING
the power of endurance

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
OPEN WATER SWIMMING,
ITS ORIGINS, EVENTS ETC.

www.fina.org
WHAT IS FINA?

FINA IS THE WORLD GOVERNING BODY FOR AQUATICS.

FINA COMPRISSES NOW 209 NATIONAL MEMBER FEDERATIONS IN THE FIVE CONTINENTS.

FOUNDED IN LONDON JULY 19, 1908 DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN LONDON (GBR).

8 NATIONAL FEDERATIONS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS FORMATION:
Belgium | Denmark | Finland | France
Germany | Great Britain | Hungary | Sweden

WATER IS OUR WORLD
AQUATICS MEANS

SWIMMING, OPEN WATER SWIMMING, DIVING, HIGH DIVING, WATER POLO, ARTISTIC SWIMMING AND MASTERS.

THERE ARE A COUNTLESS VARIETY OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH OF OUR DISCIPLINES:

- **SWIMMING**
  - Strength and speed

- **OPEN WATER SWIMMING**
  - Challenge and perseverance

- **DIVING**
  - Balance and agility

- **HIGH DIVING**
  - Courage and perfection

- **WATER POLO**
  - Team spirit and mental toughness

- **ARTISTIC SWIMMING**
  - Flexibility and grace
DESCRIPTION

OPEN WATER SWIMMING TAKES PLACE IN OUTDOOR BODIES OF WATER SUCH AS RIVERS, LAKES, OCEANS OR WATER CHANNELS.

CHALLENGES OF AN OPEN WATER RACE INCLUDE THE WATER TEMPERATURE, THE CURRENTS, SWIMMING IN A “CROWDED” ENVIRONMENT, THE BUOYS’ TURN, AND THE SPRINT TO THE ARRIVAL ZONE.
A BIT OF HISTORY

DESPITE BEING RECOGNISED BY FINA ONLY IN THE 1980S, OPEN WATER WAS HISTORICALLY THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR BATHING/SWIMMING ACTIVITIES: IN ANCIENT TIMES, THEY WERE PERFORMED IN LAKES, RIVERS, OR MAN-MADE SPAS.

Open water events were common in the late 19th and early 20th century: in 1890, for instance, a 59km race took place between Batoum and Poti, in the Black Sea. Even before that, from 1877, England started to organise an annual competition, the “Lords and Commons Race”, held over five or six miles, always in an open water environment. Races in the Seine River, in Paris (FRA), were also common in the early years of the 20th century.

Early recognition of Open Water Swimming by FINA was not done, by two main reasons: most of their athletes were professional, and the variable conditions of the discipline (waves, water and air temperature, tides...) were not compatible with the standardisation of sport, one of the main reasons for the creation of FINA in 1908.
A BIT OF HISTORY

A MYTHICAL OPEN WATER CHALLENGE HAS BEEN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL CROSSING, FIRSTLY ATTEMPTED IN THE 1860S

Matthew Webb (GBR) succeeded in August 1875, in a time of 21 hours and 45 minutes.
On the women’s side, Gertrude Ederle (USA) was the first to achieve the English Channel crossing, in August 1926, in just over 14 hours and 30 minutes.
A BIT OF HISTORY

1896
1900
1904

The first three editions of the Olympic Games organised their swimming event in open water conditions.

1991

Open Water entered in the programme of the FINA World Championships in 1991, with the inclusion of a 25km race for both men and women.

1998

5km race is added.

2007

Since 2007, FINA organises a Series, around the globe and across several continents.

2001

10km race is added.

2008

At Olympic level, the discipline made its debut in 2008 at the Beijing Games, with a 10km Marathon Swimming event for men and women.
1896 Olympic Games in Athens (GRE).

1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis (USA).
Though most open water races do not require a specific stroke, most competitors employ front crawl.

The efficiency of this stroke was demonstrated by Gertrude Ederle, who, as the first woman to swim the English Channel, employed it to beat the existing world record by more than 2 hours.
SIGHTING

Typically, buoys are stationed periodically across a large expanse to provide guidance.

Buoys may be difficult to locate due to interference from choppy water and reduced visibility through goggles.

BASICS

WHEN COVERING LARGE DISTANCES, SWIMMERS MAY HEAD OFF COURSE DUE TO CURRENT, WAVES, WIND, AND POOR VISIBILITY.
Swimmers are encouraged to 'triangulate' by looking for two aligned, easily visible objects on land that are directly behind the destination (such as the end of a pier as it lines up with a hilltop), and to make sure they continue to appear aligned during the race.
DRAFTING IS THE TECHNIQUE OF FOLLOWING ANOTHER SWIMMER SO CLOSELY THAT WATER RESISTANCE IS REDUCED.

When swimming closely alongside or behind a swimmer in the lead swimmer’s wake, resistance is reduced and the amount of effort to swim at the same speed is correspondingly reduced.
BASICS

STARTING/EXITING

Swimmers normally dive in the water from a floating pontoon or start from a certain point within the water.

Then athletes keep swimming for certain laps and exit by touching a touch pad / vertical that records the specific time of each swimmer.
ANATOMY OF A 10km EVENT

10KM - 5 LAPS OF 2 KM

- BUOY
- SPECTATORS
- COURSE
DISTANCES

TODAY’S PROGRAMME AT FINA’S SHOWCASE INCLUDES THREE INDIVIDUAL RACES (5km, 10km and 25km), AND ONE 5km TEAM EVENT (IN WHICH TWO MEN AND TWO WOMEN FROM THE SAME COUNTRY PERFORM A 1.25km LEG EACH).

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<td>JUNIOR EVENTS</td>
<td>5km (14-15 YEARS)/ 7.5km (16-17 YEARS)/ 10km (18-19 YEARS)/ TEAM EVENT 4X1.250km</td>
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WATER CONDITIONS

The water temperature should be a minimum of 16°C and a maximum of 31°C. It should be checked the day of the race, 2 hours before the start, in the middle of the course at a depth of 40 cm.
FEEDING STATION

At certain points of the race - generally on fixed pontoons - coaches and technical staff provide beverages to the swimmers, in order to hydrate them.
DID YOU KNOW?

THE MINIMUM DEPTH OF WATER AT ANY POINT ON THE COURSE SHALL BE 1.40 METRES

OPEN WATER SWIMMING IS THE ONLY DISCIPLINE WHERE THE MICROCHIP TRANSPONDER TECHNOLOGY IS PLACED ON EACH WRIST OF ALL SWIMMERS.

THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN AGE OF OPEN WATER SWIMMING IS OFTEN CONSIDERED TO BE May 3, 1810, when Lord Byron swam several miles to cross the Hellespont (now known as the Dardanelles) from Europe to Asia.