SWIMMING

take your marks, go!

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIMMING, ITS ORIGINS, STROKES, WORLD RECORDS, ETC.
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

Swimming is an individual or team sport that involves using arms and legs to move the body through water.

Typically, the sport takes place in pools, a sea, lake or river. Competitive swimming is one of the most popular Olympic sports, with events in butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle, and individual medley. In addition to these individual events, swimmers also take part in relays.
Evidence of recreational swimming in prehistoric times has been found, with the earliest evidence dating to Stone Age paintings from around 10000 years ago.

Written references date from 2000 BC, with some of the earliest references to swimming including the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Bible, Beowulf, the Quran and others.

In 1538, Nikolaus Wynmann, a German professor of languages, wrote the first swimming book, “The Swimmer or A Dialogue on the Art of Swimming”.
The first indoor swimming pool, St George’s Baths, was opened to the public in 1828. Men’s swimming became part of the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. The World Swimming Association, Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA), was formed in the 1890s. Swimming emerged as a competitive recreational activity in England in the 1830s. Women’s swimming was introduced into the Olympics in 1912. The Australian Richmond Cavill introduced the front crawl to the western world in 1802. The butterfly is developed and is at first a variant of breaststroke, until...
National swimming championships were organised since the middle of the 19th century in England (a professional body, the National Swimming Society, was created in 1837), Australia (1846), USA (1877), Germany (1882), Hungary (1896) or France (1899).

Scotland innovated in 1891, by creating a “Championship for Ladies” over 200 yards.

Despite the difference of lengths and styles at the time, FINA retained in 1908 (date of its foundation) six official events for future Olympic Games:

- **FREESTYLE**
  - 100m
  - 400m
  - 1500m

- **BACKSTROKE**
  - 100m

- **BREASTSTROKE**
  - 200m

- **RELAY**
  - 4 x 200m FREESTYLE
WORLD RECORDS

FINA HAS RECOGNISED WORLD RECORDS SINCE 1908, BUT THE “MODERN ERA” OF GLOBAL STANDARDS STARTS IN 1957, WHEN CRITERIA VERY SIMILAR THOSE EXISTING TODAY HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.

Fina currently recognises world records in the following events for both men and women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Distances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FREESTYLE</strong></td>
<td>50 m, 100 m, 200 m, 400 m, 800 m, 1500 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BACKSTROKE</strong></td>
<td>50 m, 100 m, 200 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BREASTSTROKE</strong></td>
<td>50 m, 100 m, 200 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUTTERFLY</strong></td>
<td>50 m, 100 m, 200 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY</strong></td>
<td>100 m (short course only), 200 m, 400 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELAYS</strong></td>
<td>4×50 m freestyle relay (short course only),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×100 m freestyle,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×200 m freestyle,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×50 m medley relay (short course only),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×100 m medley</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MIXED RELAYS</strong></td>
<td>4×50 m mixed freestyle (short course only),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×100 m mixed freestyle (long course only),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×50 m mixed medley (short course only),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4×100 m mixed medley (long course only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Olympic level, men and women compete in 17 events each (14 individual + 3 relays), plus one mixed relay (4x100m medley).

Olympic events are held in a 50-meter pool, called a long course pool.

In competitive swimming, four major styles have been established.

These have been relatively stable over the last 30–40 years with minor improvements.

> Butterfly
> Breaststroke
> Backstroke
> Freestyle
In competition, only one of these styles may be used except in the case of the **individual medley (or IM)**, which consists of all four.

In this latter event, **swimmers swim equal distances of BUTTERFLY, then BACKSTROKE, BREASTSTROKE, and finally, FREESTYLE.**

In Olympic competition, this event is swum in two distances – **200 and 400 meters.**

Some short course competitions also include the 100-yard or 100-meter IM – particularly, for younger swimmers (typically under 14 years) involved in club swimming, or masters swimming.
FROM THE FASTEST TO THE SLOWEST, THE ORDER OF STROKES IS AS FOLLOWS: FREESTYLE, BUTTERFLY, BACKSTROKE, AND BREASTSTROKE.

For the same distance, 25m-pool World Records are faster than in 50m (additional turns in a shorter pool “help” the performances)

BUTTERFLY
A stroke made in the prone position where both arms are lifted simultaneously out of the water and flung forward, in combination with the dolphin kick.

FREESTYLE / CRAWL
An event where the swimmers may use any stroke they choose, which typically is the crawl. The crawl is a stroke made in the prone position characterised by alternate over arm movements and a continuous up-and-down kick; originally known as the Australian crawl.
**BREASTSTROKE**
A stroke made in the prone position in which both hands move simultaneously forward, outward and rearward from in front of the chest, and the legs move in a frog-like manner.

**BACKSTROKE**
A stroke in which the swimmer is on his or her back performing a flutter-kick and rotating the arms alternately backward.

**RELAYS**
Since 2015, with the introduction of mixed relays, the number of swimming finals at the FINA World Championships is 42.

At the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) 46 events are on the programme.

Finally, at Olympic level, swimmers will contest 35 races at the 2020 Olympic Games, with the recent addition of the 800m free for men, 1500m free for women, and the mixed 4x100m medley relay.
A SPORT THAT DOESN’T HAVE AGE!

THE SWIMMING COMPETITIONS AT THE FINA WORLD MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE FOR ATHLETES AGED 25 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE.

EACH AGE GROUP (25-29 YEARS OLD, 30-34, 35-39 AND SO ON…) COMPETE IN THE FINA RECOGNISED SWIMMING RACES AND MASTERS WORLD RECORDS ARE RECOGNISED IN EACH OF THESE AGE GROUPS.
DID YOU KNOW?

LIMIT: ONE MINUTE!

In men’s swimming (50m-pool), four athletes will be remembered for a remarkable feat – performing 100m in the pool in less than one minute. They were:

- **Johnny Weissmuller (USA)**, 100m free in **58.6, 1922**
- **Lance Larson (USA)**, 100m fly in **59.0, 1960**
- **Thompson Mann (USA)**, 100m back in **59.6, 1964**
- **Roman Sloudnov (RUS)**, 100m breast in **59.97, 2001**.

TECHNOLOGY

In a constant search to provide a more understandable and attractive approach of Swimming, many associated technologies have been created in the latest years. The virtual graphic elements on TV – including the flags and name of swimmers, the World Record line and swimmer tracking technology –, and the possibilities created with the High Definition standard (including ultra slow motion action) are part of that effort. The new starting blocks or the lap counters at the bottom of the pool are other examples of this trend.

TEMPORARY POOLS

Having to install a 25m or 50m-pool may seem not very “portable”, but the technology associated to the temporary installation panel pools has steadily developed over the past years. Almost any arena or sport complex is capable of hosting a FINA competition, as in less than four weeks, all the venue dressing – including, of course, the setting-up of the pool – is ready! New opportunities can therefore be created in sites that were not originally aimed at hosting aquatic events: tennis courts, exhibition halls, multi-function arenas, basketball fields, football stadiums...
Michael Phelps (USA) is the best Olympian in history (all sports included), with a total of 28 Swimming medals in the Games, from 2004 to 2016.

These include: 2004 (Athens, GRE), 6 gold, 2 bronze; 2008 (Beijing, CHN), 8 gold; 2012 (London, GBR), 4 gold, 2 silver; 2016 (Rio, BRA), 5 gold, 1 silver.
Before Michael Phelps’ achievements, the top reference in terms of Swimming performances was Mark Spitz, also from the USA. After winning two gold, one silver and one bronze at the Mexico City 1968 Games, he went on earning an unprecedented seven Olympic titles in Munich 1972, all in World Record times: 100m and 200m free, 100m and 200m fly, 4x100m and 4x200m free, and 4x100m medley.
SURINAME HERO

Suriname has only two Olympic medals since its first participation in the Games, in 1960. They both belong to a swimmer, Anthony Nesty. In the 100m fly, he won gold in Seoul 1988, surprisingly beating favourite Matt Biondi, from the USA. Four years later, in Barcelona, Nesty was bronze medallist in his pet event. The Surinamese hero was also world champion in 1991.

JAPANESE FLAVOUR

Kosuke Kitajima is the only swimmer so far in Olympic history to have back-to-back titles in both the 100m and 200m breaststroke. The Japanese star won gold in these two events in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008, adding three more medals (one silver, two bronze) in the 4x100m medley relay, from 2004 to 2012. At the World Championships’ level, Kitajima was 12 times on the podium (including 3 gold), between 2001 and 2013.
SWIMMING & SURFING

One of the most complete athletes of his time (1910/1920s) was US Duke Kahanamoku. He took part in the 1912, 1920 and 1924 editions of the Olympic Games, earning five medals (twice gold in the 100m free, plus a silver; gold in the 4x200m free in 1920 and silver in the same event in 1912). Also in 1924, Kahanamoku was third in the water polo tournament. Besides Aquatics, he helped popularising his other passion: surfing.

UNDER 15 MINUTES

Vladimir Salnikov (RUS), presently a FINA Bureau Member, is also a living legend in Swimming. At the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, he became the first athlete to swim the 1500m free in less than 15 minutes, more precisely 14:58.27 for the gold medal. He was also first in the 400m free and the 4x200m free relay. Absent in the 1984 Games (due to Soviet Union’s boycott), Salnikov was again the best in the 1500m free, at the 1988 Olympics.
THE FLIGHT OF THE “ALBATROSS”

Nicknamed the “Albatross” for his arm-span of 2.27m, Michael Gross was one of the athletes to beat in the 1980s. Owner of 12 WR during his career, the German star amassed Olympic and World titles in the pool. In the Games, Gross collected three gold (200m free and 100m fly in 1984; 200m fly in 1988), two silver and one bronze, while at the FINA showcase he got five titles between 1982 and 1991, plus five silver and three bronze medals!

BEATING THE IDOL

Joseph Schooling, from Singapore, gave his tiny nation the first gold ever in its Olympic history, when he won the 100m fly race (in a time of 50.39) at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. Admiring Michael Phelps from his childhood, Schooling had precisely the opportunity to beat his idol in the Brazilian rendezvous, in what constituted one of the most epic races of those Games. Phelps had to share silver with Laszlo Cseh (HUN) and Chad Le Clos (RSA).
AUSTRALIAN "BULLET"

Dawn Fraser, from Australia, remains the only swimmer (male and female included) in Olympic history to have won the 100m free at three consecutive editions of the Games – 1956 (Melbourne, AUS), 1960 (Rome, ITA) and 1964 (Tokyo, JPN).

She was also the first woman to swim her pet event in less than one minute, more precisely with a 59.9 effort in October 1962.

Her career includes 8 Olympic medals and 19 WR!

WINNING SMILE

One of the images of the 1988 Olympics in Seoul (KOR) was the smiling face of Janet Evans (USA), who won three gold medals at those Games: 400m and 800m free, and 400m IM. In 1992, she revalidates the 800m free title and is second in the 400m. At world level, she had five medals (including three gold). Her 400m WR (from 1988) remained for 18 years, while her 800m and 1500m WR stood in the charts for 19 years!
French Milestone

52 years after the previous gold for France in the pool (Jean Boiteux in 1952), Laure Manaudou (FRA) became the first-ever female Olympic gold swimmer for her country at the 2004 Games in Athens. In Greece, she captured the 400m free title, adding the silver in the 800m free and the bronze in the 100m backstroke to her collection. She went on earning six more medals at the 2005 and 2007 Worlds, including three titles.

Medley Superstar

If you associate “Ukraine” to “Swimming”, the first name you should think about is Yana Klochkova. This talented athlete dominated the medley races in the first years of the 21st century, managing an unprecedented series of victories in both the 200m and 400m IM successively in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, 2001 Fukuoka and 2003 Barcelona World Championships, and 2004 Athens Games. At the 25m Worlds, she got 8 medals (including 6 gold).
The FINA Athletes Committee Chair Penny Heyns (RSA) is the only female swimmer so far to have won the 100m and 200m breaststroke Olympic titles in the same edition of the Games. It all happened in Atlanta 1996, when she became the first South African Olympic champion after the apartheid era. She set a total of 14 WR of which 11 in three months in 1999, before earning bronze in the 100m breaststroke at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney (AUS).
“THORPEDO” ERA

Ian Thorpe (AUS) made the headlines when, at 14, he became world champion in the 400m free (his pet event) in 1998 in Perth (AUS). It was the start of an outstanding career that included five Olympic gold, three silver and one bronze, at the 2000 and 2004 Games. At the FINA World Championships, he was the athlete to beat in 2001, when he won six titles in Fukuoka (JPN). In 2003, in Barcelona, he shone once more with three gold, one silver and one bronze.

TSAR OF SPRINT

Swimming fans will long remember the incomparable elegance and career longevity of Alexander Popov. The Russian icon competed at the highest level from 1991 to 2004, collecting nine Olympic medals and 11 podium presences (including six gold) at the FINA World Championships. Still today, he is the only man in the Games’ history to have triumphed in the 50m and 100m free on two successive editions (1992 and 1996).
OLYMPIC & WORLD GLORY

Jenny Thompson (USA) is one of the most decorated swimmers in history. From 1992 to 2004, she earned 12 Olympic medals, including eight titles (all in relay events). Individually, she was 100m free silver medallist in 1992 and won bronze in the same event in 2000. Thompson also excelled at the FINA Worlds, with 14 podium presences in long course and 17 awards in 25m-pool. Throughout her career, she established 15 WR.

BEST AFRICAN OLYMPIAN

Out of the eight medals for Zimbabwe at the Olympics, seven were collected by swimmer Kirsty Coventry. Her harvest started at the 2004 Games, with one gold (200m back), one silver (100m back) and one bronze (200m IM). In Beijing 2008, she revalidated her 200m back title, and earned three additional silver medals. Presently member of the IOC Executive Board, Coventry has won eight medals (including three gold) at the FINA Worlds.
MADAME BUTTERFLY

Despite having four Olympic medals (including three gold) and nine podium presences at the FINA World Championships, Mary T. Meagher (USA) is better known for the two outstanding WR she set in 1981, in the 100m (57.93) and 200m butterfly (2:05.96). Both stood in the charts for more than 18 years: Jenny Thompson (USA) improved the 100m mark in 1999, while Susie O’Neill (AUS) did better in the 200m only in 2000!

LEGENDS

BACKSTROKE QUEEN

Krisztina Egerszegi is a reference in Hungarian swimming. Among her many achievements, she won seven Olympic medals from 1988 to 1996, including five gold. Of these, three were earned in a single edition of the Games (Barcelona 1992 – 100m and 200m back, and 400m IM). Egerszegi is also the only swimmer in history to have won the 200m back title in three successive editions of the Games. She was also a double world champion in 1991.