



HUNGARY'S KRISZTINA EGERZEGI

ALL TIME GREATEST WOMAN BACKSTROKE SWIMMER

Only one other athlete had ever won an Olympic gold medal in each of three successive Olympic Games (Dawn Fraser of Australia) when Kristina Egerszegi did it in the 200m backstroke in 1988, 1992 and 1996. She also won gold medals in the 100m backstroke and 400m IM. In addition, she started her string of victories as the youngest swimming Olympic gold medal winner of all time, at the age of fourteen.

Kristina's international competition began at the top. At the 1988 Seoul Olympics she won the 200m backstroke gold in Olympic Record time of 2:09.29 over Katherin Zimmerman and Cornelia Sirch of the German Democratic Republic. She placed second in the 100m backstroke to chemically aided Kristin Otto (GDR).

She became the master of the new, no-hand touch, the 1991 backstroke turn-rule change which eliminated the requirement of swimmers touching the wall with their hand on every turn. In 1991 at the European Championships, she broke Ina Kleber's (GDR) chemically aided 100m backstroke

World Record which had been set 7 years earlier in 1984 and Betsy Mitchell's (USA) 200m backstroke World Record set in 1986. Her 200m backstroke World Record of 2:06.62 set in Athens in 1991 still stands today, 16 years later.

Kristina became the "Queen" of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics when she was the only female athlete to win three individual events - 100m and 200m backstroke, and 400m IM. She was only the third swimmer in history behind Debbie Meyer (USA, 1968) and Janet Evans (USA, 1988) to win three individual events at one Olympic Games. Four years later in 1996, at 22 years of age, she returned for another Olympics in Atlanta winning the gold for the third time in the 200m backstroke and a bronze in the 400m individual medley. Egerszegi did not enter the 100m backstroke, however her leadoff backstroke time in the medley relay, 1:01.15, was faster than the winning time in the 100m backstroke final.