



Help ISHOF pick the “10” Most Significant Events in Swimming History

1. Ulysses, says Homer, swims “in the swell of the sea” for more than two days and two nights.
2. Beowulf, the Saxon hero, who according to a 10th Century poem, swims in his armor for 5 days and nights, fighting off the “whale fishes” with his sword.
3. An African slave, shipwrecked off Martinique in 1679, swims in a storm and finally reaches land after swimming for sixty hours.
4. Ben Franklin invents hand paddles, swim fins and kite surfing in the early 1700’s.
5. Lord Byron swims across the Hellespont in 1810 to prove that the myth of Leander was possible (Leander, according to legend, nightly swam across the Hellespont to meet his lover, Hero, and returned each morning).
6. Edgar Allan Poe, the Byronic poet, swims six miles against the tide in the James River in 1824, to prove he was a better swimmer than Byron. The distance recognized as the longest endurance swim of “modern times.”
7. American Paul Boyton “swims” across the English Channel in his famous lifesaving suit in 1874.
8. Matthew Webb becomes the first person to swim across the English Channel in 1875.
9. Boyton demonstrates the utility of his famous lifesaving suit in Paris, in the Seine River, before a crowd estimated by the *New York Times* to be over 1 million people.
10. Annette Kellerman, champion swimmer of Australia, is arrested in Boston in 1906 for swimming with “bare legs”, breaking a law that required women to cover their entire bodies. She goes on to become a vaudeville and Hollywood star and the first great promoter of women’s swimming and first synchronized swimmer.
11. FINA is founded in 1908, leading to the world-wide standardization of swimming rules.
12. Charles Daniels, retires in 1910, after winning eight Olympic medals (six gold) and holding the world record in every event and every stroke from fifty yards to the mile – a feat unmatched in the history of the sport.
13. A previously unknown Hawaiian swimmer, Duke Kahanamoku breaks the World Record in the 100 yard swim by 2 3/5 seconds in the first official swim meet he ever enters in 1911. Kahanamoku goes on to win the gold medal in 1912 and 1920.
14. Fanny Durak of Australia wins the first Olympic swimming Gold medal awarded to women in the 100 meter freestyle in 1912.
15. Charlotte Epstein founds the Women’s Swimming Association of New York in 1917 and lobbies the AAU to recognize women’s swimming.
16. Al White becomes the first person to sweep the Olympic diving events when he wins gold on both the springboard and tower at the 1924 Olympic Games.
17. Aileen Riggin becomes the first woman in Olympic history to win medals in both diving and swimming (silver in 3 meter springboard and bronze in 100 meter backstroke) in the same Olympic Games in 1924.
18. Gertrude Ederle becomes arguably the most famous woman in the world after becoming the first woman and only the fifth person to swim across the English Channel in 1926. She beats the previous record, held by a man, by over 2 hours. When she returns to New York City, two million people line Broadway and give her the greatest ticker tape parade in history.
19. George Young, a 17 year old Canadian, captures the imagination of the world and wins (Bubble Gum King) William Wrigley’s Catalina Island Swim in 1927. He earns a record swimming purse of \$25,000.
20. Johnny Weissmuller sets a record of :51 seconds flat for the 100 yards freestyle on June 5, 1927. The record stands for 17 years.
21. Eleanor Holm signs a Hollywood contract for \$500 a week after winning the Olympic 100 meter backstroke title in 1932.
22. Mrs. Eleanor Holm Jarrett is “suspended” from the 1936 Olympic Team, accused of drinking champagne. At the time she is married and a Hollywood celebrity.
23. Billy Rose’s Aquacade, starring Eleanor Holm, attracts 5 million attendees and is the most popular and most profitable attraction at the 1939 New York World’s Fair.
24. Johnny Weissmuller picks Esther Williams over Olympic Champion Eleanor Holm to star along side him in Billy Rose’s 1940 San Francisco World’s Fair Aquacade. Williams goes on to become one of Hollywood’s most glamorous stars and the great promoter synchronized swimming.
25. “Dutch” Smith and Farid Simaika invent “double diving” in 1932. Double diving later becomes known as synchronized diving and joins the Olympic program in 2000.
26. Yoshiyuki Tsuruta becomes the first swimmer in stoke events to win back to back Olympic titles in consecutive Olympic Games by winning the 200 breaststroke at the 1932 Olympic Games.
27. Clarence “Buster” Crabbe is the only American male swimmer to win a gold medal at the 1932 Olympics and is discovered by Hollywood. He goes on to star as some of the great characters in Hollywood history.
28. Walter, Wally and Leonard Spence break the world record in the three man medley relay (before butterfly was accepted as a separate event) in 1933 and become the “first and only” all-brother combination to own a world relay record.
29. Katherine Rawls of Fort Lauderdale, Florida wins four a record four individual events (three swimming events and springboard diving) at the US Olympic trials in 1936.
30. Dorothy Poynton becomes the first woman to win the tower diving event in successive Olympic Games, when she defends her title at the 1936 Olympic Games.
31. Marjorie Gesting becomes the youngest Olympic gold medalist ever in swimming events when she wins the springboard event, at age 13, in Berlin in 1936.
32. Willy den Ouden sets the world mark for the women’s 100 meter freestyle of 1:04.6 in 1936. The record would last twenty years before it was broken by Australia’s Dawn Fraser.
33. Adolph Kiefer, a seventeen year old high school student, wins the 100 meter backstroke at the 1936 Olympic Games. Kiefer’s backstroke records last an astounding 15 years.
34. Oliver Halassy is the star of the Hungarian water polo team that wins the Olympic Gold medal in 1936 even though he had only one leg.
35. Alan Ford breaks Weissmuller’s 16 year old record in the 100 yard freestyle in 1943 and in 1944 becomes the first person to break the 50 second barrier.
36. With Japan banned from the 1948 Olympics, Hironoshin Furuhashi smashes the world record by over twenty seconds and beats the 19 48 Olympic champion’s time by a minute at the Japanese nationals. It makes Furuhashi, now president of Japan Swimming, a national hero.
37. Dr. Sammy Lee becomes the first Asian American to win an Olympic gold medal when he wins gold on the Tower in 1948.
38. Vicki Draves joins Sammy Lee in 1948 as the first Asian-Americans to win an Olympic gold medal and also becomes the first woman to win both the springboard and tower events in the same Olympic Games.
39. John Marshall breaks every freestyle world record from 100 to 1500 meters in the Australian National Championships of 1949.
40. David Theile of Australia defends his 1956 Olympic backstroke title in 1960 and becomes to first male backstroker to win back to back Olympic titles.
41. Bill Yorzyk is the first person to use the double dolphin kick with the butterfly arm stroke and wins the first dolphin-butterfly gold medal at the 1956 Olympic Games.
42. Hungary beats the Soviet Union to win the gold medal in the 1956 Olympic water polo tournament. The game was the single most publicized event of Olympic Games because at the time, the Soviets were suppressing the Hungarian revolution.
43. Pat McCormick becomes the first diver to win both springboard and tower in two consecutive Olympic Games (1956).
44. Debbie Meyer is the first woman in Olympic history to win three gold medals at one Olympic Games (1960).
45. Jeff Farrell’s return to the pool six days after an appendectomy to qualify for the 1960 Olympic Team. Jeff was, at the time, the world’s fastest swimmer.
46. Ingrid Kramer becomes the first non-American in Olympic history to sweep the women’s diving events at the 1960 Olympic Games.
47. Chet “the jet” Jastremski breaks the world record in the 100 meter breaststroke six times over a six week period in 1961, lowering the record by 3.6 seconds.

48. Donna deVarona, a double Olympic gold medalist at the 1964 Olympic Games, becomes the first female sportscaster in America when she covers the 1965 AAU National Swimming Championships for ABC.
49. Don Schollander becomes only the second athlete in Olympic history (the first being Jesse Owens) to win four gold medals in a single Olympic Games (1964).
50. Dawn Fraser becomes the first woman to break the one minute barrier in the 100 meter freestyle in 1962. In 1964, she wins her third consecutive 100 meter Olympic gold medal.
51. The International Swimming Hall of Fame, Inc. incorporates in Florida and construction of the pool begins in 1964.
52. James E. "Doc" Counsilman publishes "The Science of Swimming." The book revolutionizes the methodology of coaching of swimming (1968).
53. Felipe Munoz comes from behind to win Mexico's only gold medal in the 200 yard breaststroke at the 1968 Olympic Games.
54. Mark Spitz's seven gold medals and seven world records at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games.
55. Shane Gould of Australia becomes the first person to win five individual Olympic medals at a single Olympic Games in 1972.
56. Roland Matthes of the German Democratic Republic becomes the first person to sweep four backstroke events in consecutive Olympic Games in 1972.
57. Gunnar Larsson wins the gold medal in the 400 Individual medley by two one thousandths of a second over American Tim McKee. The closeness of the race changes the way races are judged in the future, limiting placement decisions to hundredths of a second.
58. Klaus Dibiasi becomes the first and only diver to win the same Olympic title in three consecutive Olympic Games, 1968, 1972, 1976.
59. Kornelia Ender becomes the 1st woman to win four gold medals at one Olympics (1976), all in world-record time.
60. The USA Women's 4 x 100 free relay team wins the gold medal in 1976, beating the heavily favored, steroid loaded team from the DDR.
61. Mary T. Meagher sets a world record in 1978, in the 200 meter butterfly at the US Nationals in Brown Deer, WI. The record lasts 19 years.
62. Vladimir Salnikov becomes the first person to break the 15 minute barrier for the 1500 meter freestyle at the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980.
63. Candy Costie and Tracie Ruiz win the first gold medal awarded for duet synchronized swimming at the 1984 Olympic Games. Ruiz also wins gold in solo.
64. John Sieben, a relative unknown Australian, beats a field of world record holders in the 200 meter butterfly to win the gold medal in world & Olympic record time at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.
65. Lynne Cox completes a 2.7 mile swim in 1987, across the Bering Strait, from Russia to Alaska, where the water temperature ranged from 38-42 degrees Fahrenheit.
66. Anthony Nesty of Surinam becomes the first swimmer of African descent to win an Olympic Gold medal when he wins the 100 meter butterfly at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games.
67. Greg Louganis rebounds after striking his head on the board to become the first male diver to win consecutive double-double (springboard and tower) Olympic diving titles in 1988.
68. Duncan Armstrong, an Australian ranked 46th in the world, wins the gold and sets a new world record in the 200 meter freestyle at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.
69. Kristin Otto, of the German Democratic Republic, wins six gold medals at the 1988 Olympic Games, the most ever won at one Games by a woman.
70. Benoît Lecomte swims across the Atlantic Ocean in 1988. He swims a total of 5,600 kilometers in 72 days, swimming six to eight hours daily. He was accompanied by two sailors on a sailboat.
71. The Berlin Wall collapses in 1989 and evidence documents the use of anabolic steroids by East German swimmers.
72. Pablo Morales, after setting the world record in the 100 meters butterfly in 1986 and failing to qualify for the 1988 Olympic team, returns in 1992 to win Olympic gold.
73. The USA Synchronized Swimming Team scores the sport's first perfect 100 and wins the team event Gold medal at the 1996 Olympic Games.
74. Kristina Egerszegi wins the 200 backstroke in 1996, making her only the second person (Dawn Fraser being the other) to win gold medals in the same swimming event in three different Olympic Games.
75. Janet Evans, (who still holds world records set over 15 years ago) is chosen to assist Mohammad Ali in lighting the Olympic stadium flame at the 1996 Olympic Games.
76. Matt Biondi ends his brilliant career by winning his eleventh Olympic medal, eight of them gold, at the 1996 Olympic Games.
77. Alexander Popov wins the 50 and 100 meter freestyle for the second consecutive Olympic Games in 1996.
78. Ian Thorpe wins the 400 meter freestyle at the 1998 World Championships (Perth, AUS), in front of his home crowd, at just 15 years of age.
79. Pieter van Hoogenband smashes the :48 second barrier for the 100 meter freestyle and establishes a new world record of :47.84 in 2000.
80. Fu Mingxia becomes the first female diver to win gold medals in three different Olympic Games when she wins the 3 meter springboard title in 2000.
81. Susie O'Neill breaks Mary T. Meagher's 19 year old record in the 200 meter butterfly in 2000.
82. Gary Hall, Jr. participates in his third Olympic Games. His father also competed in three Olympic Games. The two Gary's become the first father and son to achieve this accomplishment.
83. Michael Phelps wins eight medals in the 2004 Olympic Games. The eight medals tie 1980 USSR gymnast Alexandr Dityatin for most medals won by an athlete in a single Olympics.
84. Dimitri Sautin participates in his fourth Olympic Games (2004), wins his 7th Olympic medal and becomes the most decorated diver in Olympic history.
85. Mark Spitz and Donna deVarona join the Board of ISHOF in 2005 "to preserve the legacy of our great sports."

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Help the International Swimming Hall of Fame pick the "10" Most Significant Events in Swimming History.

If you have an event or events that are not included in the list above, please write in the space provided below. Events that receive the most votes will be chosen as ISHOF's "10" Most Significant Events in Swimming History.

**Place your choices
 next to each number**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____

Other (not listed) _____

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