



FINA

FÉDÉRATION
INTERNATIONALE
DE NATATION

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 COMPRISES 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



1875

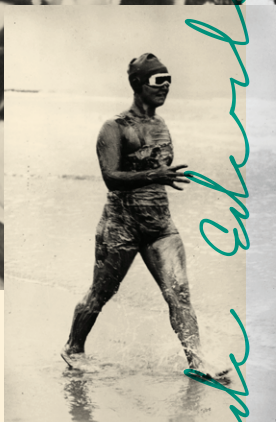
Captain

Matthew Webb

(GBR)

succeeded in
August 1875,
in a time of

**21 hours and
45 minutes.**



Gertrude Ederle

1926

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.



2001

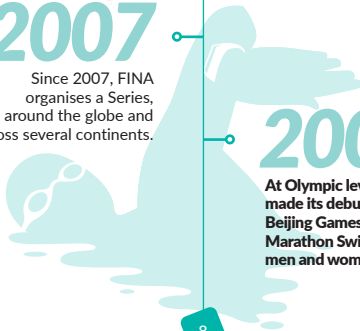
10km race is added.

2007

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

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.





/1904/Olympic Games in St Louis (USA).



/1896/Olympic Games in Athens (GRE).





BASICS

THE MAIN SUMMER SEASON FOR
OPEN WATER SWIMMING IS
FROM MAY UNTIL OCTOBER.

STROKE

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.



BASICS

WHEN COVERING LARGE DISTANCES, SWIMMERS MAY HEAD OFF COURSE DUE TO CURRENT, WAVES, WIND, AND POOR VISIBILITY.

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.





SIGHTING



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.

BASICS

DRAFTING IS THE TECHNIQUE OF FOLLOWING ANOTHER SWIMMER SO CLOSELY THAT WATER RESISTANCE IS REDUCED.

DRAFTING

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.





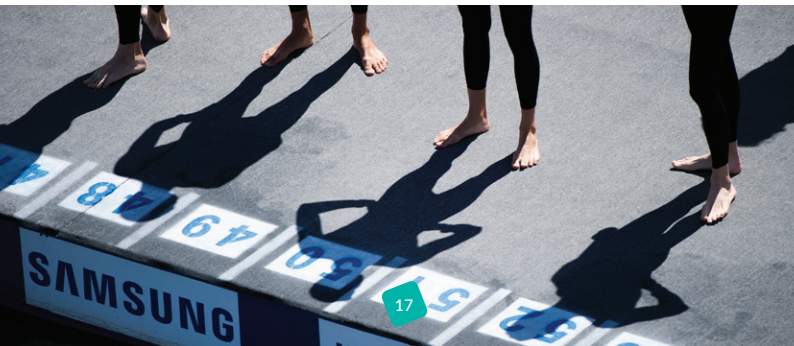
BASICS

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.

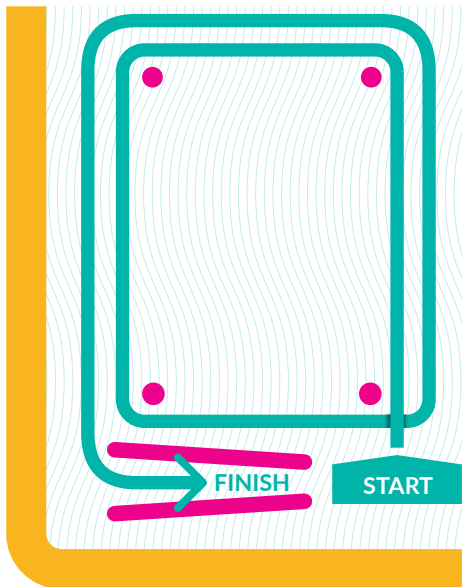




ANATOMY OF A 10km EVENT

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).**

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

5km / 10km / 25km / TEAM EVENT 4X1.250km

SERIES EVENTS

10km

OTHER DISTANCES

30km / 32km / 57km / 88km

JUNIOR EVENTS

5km (14-15 YEARS)/

7.5km (16-17 YEARS)/

10km (18-19 YEARS)/

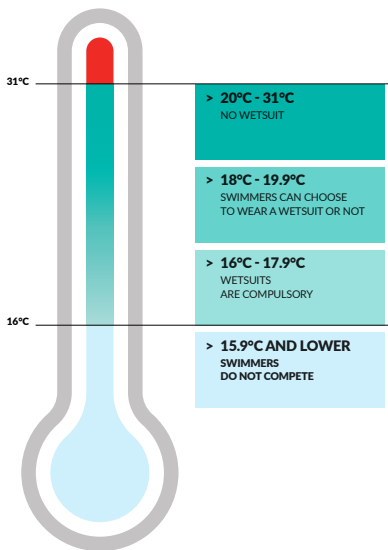
TEAM EVENT 4X1.250km



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.**



A close-up photograph of a swimmer's head and arm above the water. The swimmer is wearing a yellow and blue swim cap and has a black watch with a red buckle on their left wrist. They are holding a clear plastic bottle of green sports drink. The bottle is being poured into a white bucket that is tilted towards the swimmer. The bucket is mounted on a metal structure, possibly a pontoon, which has an American flag attached to it. The background is a blurred view of the water.

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.









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