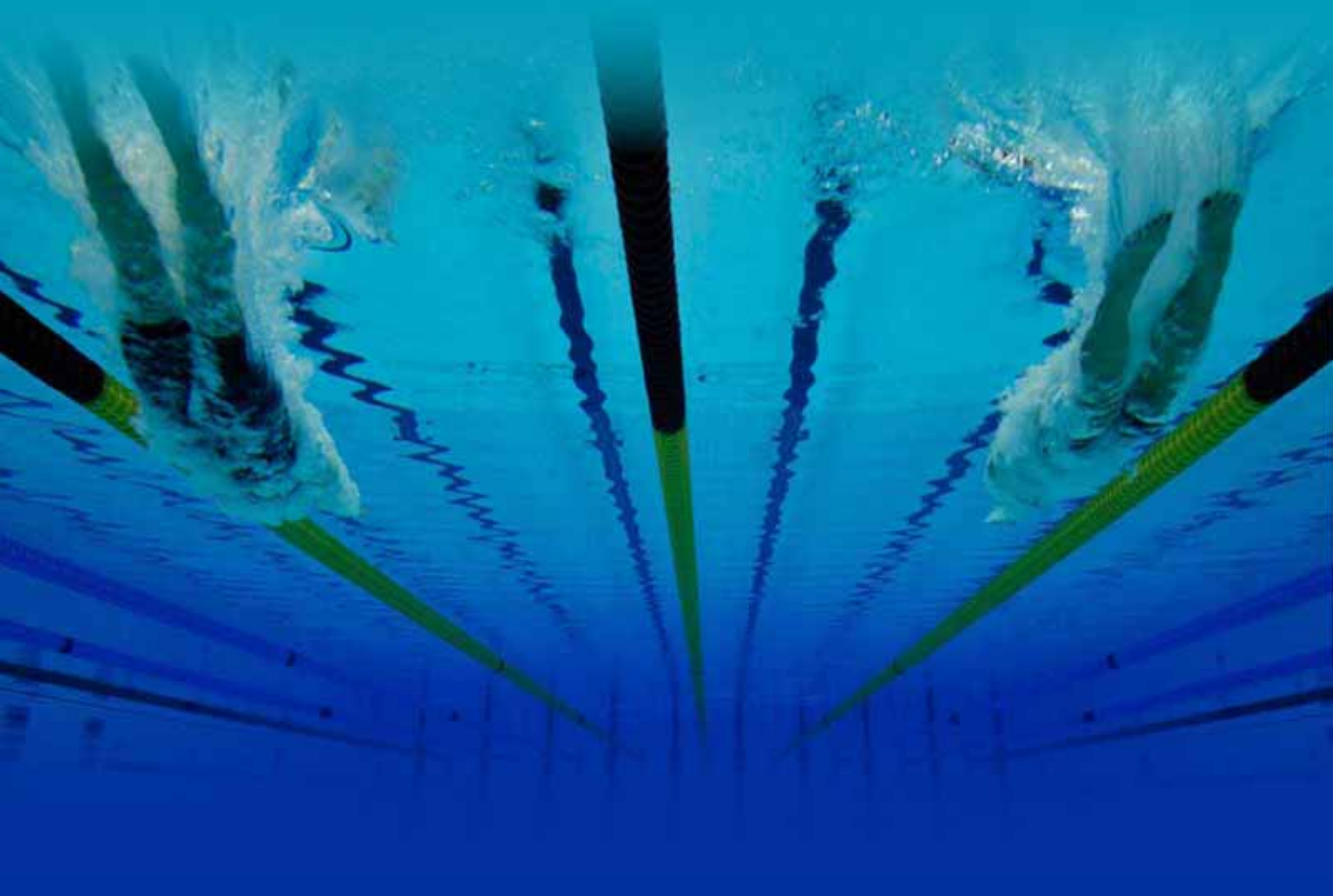


RACE-BY-RACE PREVIEWS ■ A LOOK INSIDE THE OLYMPIC POOL ■ TOP 10 OLYMPIC MOMENTS

Swimming WORLD

2012 OLYMPIC SWIMMING PREVIEW

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ON THE COVER: The athletes wait four years for this opportunity—a once-in-a-lifetime chance for many. They put in millions of meters of work, following that black line at the bottom of the pool in hopes it will lead to a medal of gold...or silver or bronze. Ladies and gentlemen, it's time for the Olympic Games...and for Swimming World's previews of all of the races. (See stories, pages 20-51). [COVER PHOTO BY LEO MASON, US PRESSWIRE]

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[PHOTO BY MENTYRE]

PICTURED » 2008 USA Men's 400 Free Relay (from left) Jason Lezak, Michael Phelps, Garrett Weber-Gale and Cullen Jones

TOP 10 OLYMPIC MOMENTS

BY JEFF COMMINGS

Jason Lezak stuns world with anchor leg in 400 freestyle relay (2008)



"Not again." Those words rattled in Jason Lezak's head as he pushed off the wall for the final 50 meters of freestyle in the much-anticipated relay battle with the French.

Lezak was facing the fact that this could be his third-straight loss at the Olympics in the 400 free relay. With a silver from 2000 (see No. 5 of the "Top 10 Olympic Moments") and a bronze in 2004, Lezak wanted to have the gold medal around his neck this time.

A half-body length behind Alain Bernard at the turn, there wasn't a person watching who believed Lezak could pull it off and help Michael Phelps achieve his goal of winning eight gold medals.

But it happened. Lezak saw an opportunity to draft off Bernard in the final stretch as the Frenchman veered toward the lane line in an obvious sign of fatigue. Aided by the draft, Lezak found the will to dig deeper and go head-to-head with Bernard in the final 15 meters, pulling off the fastest relay split in history: 46.06. For the first time since 1996, the Americans were standing on the top of the medal stand in the sprint free relay.

Lezak became a worldwide hero. The phrase "pulling a Lezak" became part of the swimming lexicon. And Phelps was able to continue his run to Olympic glory.

Janet Evans wins 400 free (1988)

The pre-race tension alone was enough to get millions of people watching one of the last epic battles of East vs. West.

Evans had already won Olympic gold in the 400



meter IM. But winning the 400 free wasn't going to be as easy. She was up against East Germans Heike Friedrich and Anke Mohring, who, as we now know, had steroids pumping through their veins.

How could this tiny teenager from Fullerton, Calif., beat them?

Evans took the race out in 59.99. The East Germans made a move at the 200, but Evans was still ahead, her arms flailing in her trademark windmill style. The East Germans looked patient. They swam as if they were waiting for Evans to tire and concede the race.

She never did.

At the 300, Evans shifted into another gear. She was breathing twice, then putting her head down for four strokes—at the end of a distance race! Evans took more

— continued on 7



[PHOTO BY MARK BAKER, REUTERS]

PICTURED » Janet Evans



PICTURED »
Michael Phelps

TOP OLYMPIC MOMENTS — continued from 6

than a second off her own world record with a 4:03.85. All the East Germans could do was watch Evans wave to the crowd. In an interview after the race, Friedrich simply said: "She (Evans) is in another dimension."
For the 18 years her record stood unscathed, Evans

was, indeed, in another dimension. And though the record is now two seconds faster, note that Federica Pellegrini's last 100 is almost a second slower than Evans' split in 1988.

Michael Phelps wins No. 7 by 1-hundredth of a second (2008)



Everything was on the line in the final of the men's 100 butterfly in Beijing. *Everything.*

This was the moment sports fans had been waiting for all week. This could be the moment Michael Phelps equals Mark Spitz's accomplishment of seven gold medals in one Olympics. Or it could be the moment an American-born Serb steals all the headlines in all the newspapers around the world. Standing in Phelps' way was Milorad Cavic, who was not quiet about his desire to knock Phelps off his pedestal.

Cavic led at 50 meters, followed by world record holder Ian Crocker. Phelps was in seventh. Nothing new there. But at 85 meters, Cavic was not showing any signs of giving up. Phelps had caught and passed everyone else in the field, but wasn't gaining on Cavic as quickly as he needed. With five meters to go, the result was still in doubt. Cavic had an arm's-length lead on his final

— continued on 8



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PICTURED »
Misty Hyman

TOP OLYMPIC MOMENTS — *continued from 7*
stroke, which would turn out to be the stroke of destiny. A glide that lasted too long resulted in Cavic lifting his head and slowing him down as Phelps took a half stroke that, at first, was deemed to be a mistake. But it was Phelps' fortune that he took the half stroke, as he pounded the pad harder than Cavic, stopping the clock a mere hundredth of a second ahead of Cavic for gold medal No. 7.

Five minutes of instant replay still had our mouths agape. The Serbian delegation filed a protest. But the clock never lies, and Phelps accepted the gold medal for the seventh time in China. The following day, he won No. 8 and became a legend.

Misty Hyman upsets Susie O'Neill to win 200 fly (2000)

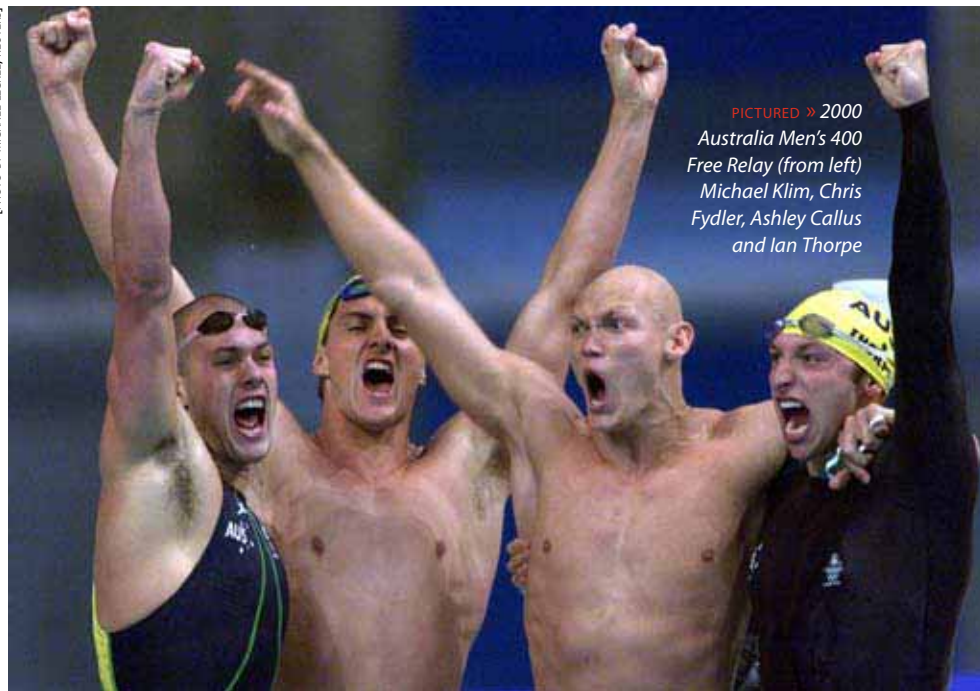


Ian Thorpe's 400 free aside, no other race had a more clear-cut favorite than the women's 200 fly at the Sydney Olympics. Susie O'Neill could slip on the start, swallow water and glide into each turn—there was no

way she could lose the race. She was the new Madame Butterfly—the nickname given to her predecessor, Mary T. Meagher.

Misty Hyman probably knew that as much as anyone, but something happened to Hyman when she surfaced after the first 15 meters. She was ahead of O'Neill. And she didn't give up. After the 150, her arms were still getting out of the water, which was uncharacteristic of Hyman. People used to refer to her 200 fly as "fly and die."

O'Neill didn't slip on the start, swallow water or miss a turn. Her race was nearly perfect. But Hyman's was closer to perfection. It took awhile for people to realize that she broke Meagher's 19-year-old American record. As monumental as it was that she took down T's standard, it was more stunning to see the gold medal draped around Hyman's neck... to see Madame Butterfly, Susie O'Neill, standing one step below her on the podium.



PICTURED » 2000
Australia Men's 400
Free Relay (from left)
Michael Klim, Chris
Fydler, Ashley Callus
and Ian Thorpe

Aussies shock Americans in home pool in 400 free relay (2000)



The Americans were the proven veterans of the 400 free-style relay, and had never lost the event at the Olympic level when they stepped up to race the Australians in the final in 2000. The four Australians ready to race certainly had talent on their side, but could they really pull it off? We all remember the comment Gary Hall Jr. gave the press before the race, boasting that the Aussies were guitars that would be smashed by the end of the race.

How did the Australians win the race? Certainly they had a crowd of thousands pulling them along, but race strategy was a major factor. With the exception of Michael Klim's then-world record leadoff swim, the Australians let the Americans overswim the first 50 and tire at the end.

Ian Thorpe dove in about a half-second ahead of Gary Hall Jr., but that lead didn't last long, as Hall powered through the first half of the swim. At the turn, Hall was almost a body length ahead,

— *continued on 9*



[PHOTO BY DOV CHADEZ]

PICTURED » 1976 USA Women's 400 Free Relay (from left) Kim Peyton, Wendy Boglioli, Jill Sterkel and Shirley Babashoff

United States its only gold medal, the little stone hurled at Goliath turned into a boulder that slowly began to chip away at the East German armor. It would take 14 years, but the secret of steroids hidden behind the Iron Curtain would be revealed.

Women compete in first Olympic 800 free relay (1996)



Female swimmers have always had to wait for the IOC to catch up with the times. They didn't get to swim in the Olympics until the 5th Olympiad in 1912. Rules dictating that swimwear

— continued on 10

Olympics until the 5th Olympiad in 1912. Rules dictating that swimwear

TOP OLYMPIC MOMENTS — continued from 8 hoping the 400 freestyle Olympic champion had tired from his race an hour earlier.

But Thorpe had plenty in the tank, as Hall began to tire and sink lower in the water. With 10 meters remaining, Thorpe's endurance kicked in, giving the Australians their first relay Olympic win in 44 years. The race has been voted as Australia's most popular sporting moment in history.

American women win 400 free relay (1976)



Just about everyone in the swimming arena at the 1976 Games in Montreal assumed the East German women would handily win the meet's final event, the 400 free

relay. After all, the drug-enhanced Germans had already won 11 of the previous 12 events.

But Kim Peyton, Wendy Boglioli, Jill Sterkel and Shirley Babashoff wanted a different outcome. The four had put everything on the line that week, and were determined to make a final attempt to take down Goliath.

Equating this to the USA hockey team trouncing the Russians in 1980. This wasn't supposed to happen. But it did. When Babashoff touched the wall to give the



[PHOTO BY MARCELO DEL POZO, REUTERS]

PICTURED » Jenny Thompson, anchor leg of 1996 USA Women's 800 Free Relay

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[PHOTO BY AL SCHOENFELD]

PICTURED »
Mark Spitz and
Shane Gould

TOP OLYMPIC MOMENTS — *continued from 9*

should look like little skirts made the women's side of the sport look dainty until the 1960s.

For the most part, women have been able to swim the same events as their male counterparts. Surprisingly, they debuted the 50 free Olympic race in 1988, the same year the men finally were able to swim it.

So why did it take 88 years from the time the men's 800 free relay was swum in Olympic competition (1908) for the women to get an 800 free relay of their own? Imagine the great races we missed. Would the American women have taken down the East Germans in another relay at the 1976 Games? Would Franziska van Almsick finally have won that elusive Olympic gold medal by leading the Germans to gold in 1992? Would Janet Evans' star have shone brighter with a swim on the USA 800 free relay in 1988?

When the first swimmers dove into the water in Atlanta, van Almsick took a body-length lead over American Trina Jackson. Cristina Teuscher snatched the lead from the Germans, with Sheila Taormina and Jenny Thompson never relinquishing it.

With the victory, Thompson won her third relay gold of the meet, the first female to do so and a feat matched only by Mark Spitz in 1972 and Jim Montgomery in 1976. She would go on to repeat that accomplishment in 2000.

Mark Spitz and Shane Gould steal the show (1972)



While Mark Spitz was churning his way through history, winning seven gold medals and setting seven world records, Australia's Shane Gould was quietly making her mark in swimming history. Not only did she set three world records

of her own, but she also was the first person—and so far, the only person—to win a medal in every freestyle race

contested.

In addition to winning the 200 and 400 freestyles in world record time, she took bronze in the 100 and silver in the 800. Add in her gold medal and world record in the 200 IM, and you have the makings of an achievement that could be argued as equal to Spitz's accomplishment.

Spitz only swam four individual events. Had he contested the 400 free, an event in which he used to hold the world record, Spitz may have set the standard at eight gold medals and eight world records!

Eric the Eel wows the world (2000)



Just minutes after Eric Moussambani of Equatorial Guinea touched the wall to finish his heat in the men's 100 freestyle, swimming fans around the world were introduced to a new name that would garner as much press as Australia's home-

town hero Ian Thorpe and the event's eventual world record holder, Pieter van den Hoogenband.

FINA, swimming's international governing body, invited several developing nations to send representatives to participate in some sports, and the three swimmers in the first heat of the 100 freestyle were at the Games as part of that wildcard invitation. Perhaps it was a case of the jitters—or not being informed of the rules—but two of the swimmers in the heat false-started and were disqualified. That left Moussambani alone on the blocks, ready to make history.

Dubbed "Eric the Eel" by the media, Moussambani wasn't wearing the highly touted competition suits of the time, nor did he have the cleanest dive or the perfect stroke. But his swim was getting the crowd on its feet, cheering loudly for a man who had no shot at Olympic gold. The only person for whom the Aussie crowd cheered louder was Thorpe.

Eric the Eel reached the 50-meter mark 40 seconds after the race started. For a man who lived in a country

— *continued on 11*

[PHOTO BY REUTERS]



PICTURED »
Eric the Eel



[PHOTO PROVIDED BY INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING HALL OF FAME]

PICTURED » Dawn Fraser

TOP OLYMPIC MOMENTS — continued from 10

with no pools, The Eel managed a flip turn and pushed off for home, the crowd urging him on in the last 25 meters.

It seemed like an eternity. Eric the Eel swam the 100 meter freestyle in 1:52.72, easily the slowest time ever swum in the event at the Olympic Games. But the crowd acted as if they had witnessed smoke on the water, giving him a standing ovation.

The IOC ended their goodwill program after 2000 in

favor of time standards, so it is unlikely the Olympics will see another Eric the Eel. But as of early June, more than 200,000 people have relived Eric the Eel's moment of glory on YouTube, so the legend still lives on.

Dawn Fraser wins three gold medals in 100 free (1956, 1960, 1964)



It's a daunting task to win an event twice in a row at the Olympics. So many new contenders can show up in four years, not to mention the defending champion is four years older and, most of the time, not as sharp as he or she was the first time.

Dawn Fraser was 27 at the 1964 Tokyo Games when she climbed on the blocks in her attempt to win her third straight gold medal in the women's 100 free. Age was not a factor for the quick Australian, who became the first woman to break the one-minute barrier in the event with a 59.9.

Outside of that splash-heavy, arm-throwing dive, Fraser's swim looked effortless, and one wonders if she could have won a fourth straight gold in 1968. Hungary's Kristina Egerszegi is the only other woman to achieve an Olympic three-peat, winning the 200 back in 1988, 1992 and 1996. Four other men have come close to accomplishing this feat, but it's likely we'll have a male member of the group in a few weeks, with Michael Phelps and Kosuke Kitajima racing for gold in London. ♦

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During London's bid for the 2012 Olympics, the design of the Aquatic Centre was touted as evidence that the city would provide a show worthy of the Olympic stage.

Aspectator entering the London Olympic Park from the bridge at the southeast corner will end up stepping on something large and expensive. That "something" is the London Aquatic Centre, which will feature the swimming and diving events during the 2012 London Olympics.

Treading over the spectator bridge built directly into the roof of the facility, an Olympic fan can only marvel at the engineering that went into building this massive aboveground structure.

From an aerial perspective, the facility—designed by acclaimed Iraqi-British architect, Zaha Hadid—has been described as a "tongue" and "sea turtle," inspired by the oval roof shape that dips and curves, and from the two towering detachable seating structures reminiscent of "fins."

From Hadid's website, she envisioned the design as "a concept inspired by the fluid geometry of water in motion." Much effort went into bringing this vision to reality. Although the roof weighs 3,000 tons, only three points support it: two concrete supports at the north end and a support wall at the south end. This three-point support system creates an enormous slip-and-slide roof design that is impressive despite its magnitude. One reviewer describes the roof—when viewed from inside the facility—as a "roof (that) floats and undulates" like a wave.

During London's bid for the 2012 Olympics, this design was touted as evidence that London would provide a show worthy of the

Olympic stage. The Aquatic Centre was the first venue designed and the last finished, with construction running from July 2008 until July 2011.

It didn't come cheap, either. The entire facility cost upwards of 269 million euros (more than 331 million U.S. dollars), and was plagued by a continually escalating budget. Some compromises had to be made in the process. The detachable seating on either side of the facility—to increase seating by 15,000—was originally envisioned as a permanent fixture beneath the expansive roof. Instead, after the Games, the detachable seating will be removed, keeping the facility seating at a reasonable 2,500.

Before the seating is removed, though, the facility will hold 17,500 spectators, all looking toward the center 50-meter pool in anticipation of some record-breaking swims. There are three pools total, and the central pool is designed with moveable booms and floors to change the depth and size for different competition levels post-Olympics. Between the surfaces of the 50-meter competition pool, 25-meter diving pool and 50-meter warm-up pool, 180,000 tiles were laid.

Past the smooth concrete walls and floors, the color scheme is in aquatic tones of yellows and blues. Looking at the diving area, one would think that the platforms are carved from the concrete walls of the facility. The fluidity of the design is one of the key architectural features that promote an overall aquatic theme in the facility.

After the Olympics have come and gone, and the confetti is swept clean from the streets of London, the Aquatic Centre will still stand. Although the detachable "flippers" housing the 15,000 additional seats for the Olympic races will be removed and replaced by glass walls, the undulating design will stand as a testament to the permanence and magnificence of the Olympic Games. ♦

PICTURED » *The Aquatic Centre was the first venue designed and the last finished, with construction running from July 2008 until July 2011.*

An Architectural Marvel

BY SHOSHANNA RUTEMILLER

[PHOTO BY LEO MASON, US PRESSWIRE]

Welcome,

PICTURED »
Wenlock (left) is the mascot for the Olympics, while Mandeville is the mascot for the Paralympics.



WENLOCK & MANDEVILLE

BY SHOSHANNA RUTEMILLER

The 2012 Olympic mascots, Wenlock and Mandeville, display to the world the culture and Olympic history of London, host of the 2012 Olympic Games.

What has four limbs, one eye and a headlight peeping out the top of its head? If you guessed the mascot duo created for the 2012 London Olympics, you are correct!

In December 2009, the world welcomed Wenlock and Mandeville to a small and exclusive community of Olympic mascots. While these two characters represent the culture and history of London and the city's Olympic connections, they also have an interactive digital side appealing to children growing up in the digital age.

Wenlock is the mascot for the Olympics, Mandeville for the Paralympics. Both have reflective metallic bodies with an oversized single eye, a headlight adorning the top of their heads and the symbol for the 2012 London Olympics displayed on their chests. Wenlock has five friendship bracelets on his wrists, one for

each of the five Olympic colors. This is in contrast to Mandeville's single balance bracelet, in deference to the control and body-awareness needed by Paralympic athletes.

Every element on the Olympic mascots is representative of either the Olympics or the city of London. The headlight on top of their heads alludes to the black taxis in the streets of London. Their single eye is actually a thermal (TA) camera lens, so that Mandeville and Wenlock can capture everything they observe on their adventures. Their head shapes are similar to the shape of the Olympic stadium, and they are reflective metal so spectators can metaphorically "see" themselves in the mascots.

MASCOTS HAVE A STORY

Wenlock and Mandeville have an interesting back-story packaged with their characters. Perhaps the Olympic Committee realized this story was the easiest way to explain its choice of such oddly designed mascots. In the story, Mandeville and Wenlock are created from two drops of steel left over from the completion of the last Olympic bearing. A steel worker noticed the steel drippings on the floor, brought them home and used

the drops to mold two shiny metallic creatures for his children. His children then placed the two characters on their windowsill. A passing rainbow spontaneously infused them with life and personality. This rainbow animated Mandeville and Wenlock, giving them the ability to fly and interact with Olympic athletes all over the world.

Interacting with and educating a younger audience is a key marketing goal for those creating the "Olympic Brand." In fact, making the mascots kid-friendly is part of the Olympics "Get Set" educational program. Students can follow the progress of the mascots as the Olympic and Paralympic Games approach. With their last digital short released in May 2012, the mascots now have four films about their adventures. Titled "Rainbow to the Games," these films appropriately refer to the rainbow that initially caused their animation. The duo flies around the world trailing a rainbow in their wake, adding color and light to athletes and people shrouded in darkness. In one animated scene, Mandeville spins around an Olympic runner, dressing her in the new British Olympic garb.

— continued on 15

APPEALING TO A YOUNGER AUDIENCE

Truly, these mascots are created to entertain children immersed in the digital age. From their shiny metal exterior and web- and video-centered promotions, it is clear that the creators knew a plush panda bear wasn't going to cut it anymore. Log on to a website created specifically for these characters, and a bubbly home page pops up, splashed with bright colors and cheerful music. Visitors are encouraged to "watch the video of the story of the mascots" and "create their own," forming an interactive forum geared toward making kids excited about the Olympic Games. Mandeville and Wenlock even have their own Facebook fan pages and Twitter followings. Using the mascots as the face of social media for the Games, the Olympics become more appealing to a younger audience.

Apart from an online presence, the mascots have a physical state. Schools around London can pay

a small appearance fee and have Mandeville and Wenlock come visit for a day. As part of their visit, students are both entertained by life-sized versions of the Olympic mascots and educated about the benefits of physical activity.

A BIT OF LONDON'S OLYMPIC HISTORY

Despite the mascots' hyper-digitalization and an emphasized web presence, Mandeville and Wenlock retain historical aspects. Buried among the neon colors and digital short films, their names actually allude to a bit of London's Olympic history. Wenlock derives his name from the small town of Much Wenlock in Shropshire, where a county precursor to the modern Olympic Games was held in 1890. Mandeville is similarly named after the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire that held a precursor to the Paralympic Games. Referring to these Olympic precursors highlights London's long history with the Olympic Games.

CREATING THE "OLYMPIC BRAND"

In the end, the mascots are just a small piece in creating the "Olympic Brand." To create this brand, the 2012 London Olympic Committee came together and decided how it wanted to be represented in the Olympics. To aid in this process, London turned to its citizens. In October 2008, the Olympic Committee advertised a design contest to create the Olympic mascots. During the design process, the general public revealed it wanted more than just a mascot; the people also wanted a story. And so the intricate fictional tale of how Mandeville and Wenlock came about was presented in conjunction with the mascots. London-based creative agency Iris came up with the final designs for Mandeville and Wenlock.

Whether you love their shiny metallic gleam and oversized eyeball or not, Wenlock and Mandeville display to the world the culture and Olympic history of London, host of the 2012 Olympic Games. And they manage to enhance and involve a younger audience as well. ♦

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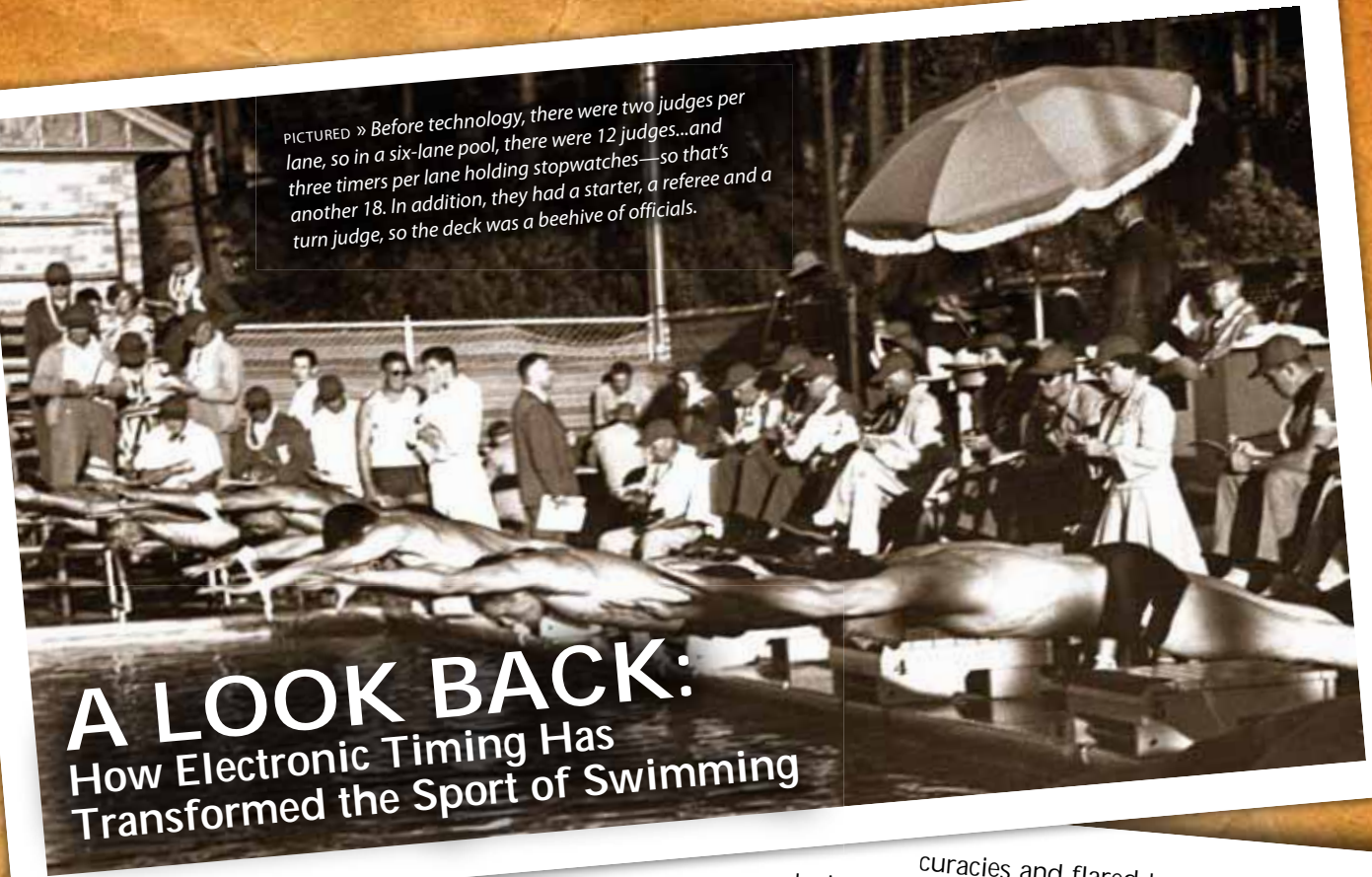


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PICTURED » Before technology, there were two judges per lane, so in a six-lane pool, there were 12 judges...and three timers per lane holding stopwatches—so that's another 18. In addition, they had a starter, a referee and a turn judge, so the deck was a beehive of officials.



A LOOK BACK: How Electronic Timing Has Transformed the Sport of Swimming

PROVIDED BY COLORADO TIME SYSTEMS

It's important to remember the sport's history and how swimming has evolved into what it is today.

How many Olympic or competitive swimmers today could imagine their swim meet touchpads and electronic timing replaced with a team of volunteers determining their fate with stopwatches and questionable eyesight?

Competitive swimmers today rely on state-of-the-art technology during their practice and during meets to measure their performance precisely and accurately. However, only 40 years ago, the sport of swimming looked very different than it does today—and we have technology to thank for many of the advances.

Swim meets circa 1970 and earlier were a stark contrast to what the sport looks like today. With very little technology available in the early days, people had to do everything that the current technology does during a swim meet.

Before technology, there were two judges per lane, so in a six-lane pool, there were 12 judges...and three timers per lane holding stopwatches—so that's another 18. In addition, they had a starter, a referee and a turn judge, so the deck was a beehive of officials.

Add all of the competitors and coaches, and the environment became a breeding ground for inaccuracies and flared tempers. Imagine trying to see who won a race through white-out splashing, or determining if swimmers were touching underwater or above water at the finish line. Swim times could vary as much as 3-tenths of a second among the three human timers. This caused delays, arguments and—many times—no clear-cut winner.

Each race's start was signaled by the sound of a pistol. Designated timers started a stopwatch, and coaches hoped that the timers' thumbs were pushing the stopwatch "on time." After the race was finished—and before the meet could continue—swimmers waited for the "official recorders" to write down their times on paper.

One could only imagine the possibilities for errors during this process. Human error combined with human bias opened up an array of concerns for competitors and coaches during these early years.

THE OLYMPIC CONTROVERSY THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR ELECTRONIC TIMING

The 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games marked the first time swimming was fully automated, using electronic timing. Previously, stopwatches were used, and the times were only recorded to 1-tenth of a second—compared to electronic timing, which records to the hundredth of a second. This introduction didn't happen because the sport welcomed technology—rather, there was a timing controversy that led up to the 1968 Olympics' adoption of electronic timing.

During this time, there was actually a great deal

— continued on 17

A LOOK BACK — continued from 16

of pushback from the establishment—it resisted change and distrusted the reliability of technology. It also questioned the safety of using technology underwater.

All this changed in 1960 during the Rome Olympics after a controversial race in which Australia's John Devitt was awarded the gold medal in the 100 meter freestyle over American Lance Larson.

At the time, there was an electronic timer being used—but only as a back-up system. Results in 1960 were decided by finish judges who relied on their eyes, and they did not use replays. That reliance on human eyesight began this Olympic controversy.

It seems that Larson knew the only way he could win was just reach for the wall underwater while Devitt touched the wall in plain sight above water. There were three first-place judges and three second-place judges. Of the three first-place judges, they were split, 2-1, favoring Devitt. The three second-place judges also favored Devitt for second, by 2-1. Therefore, the six judges were split, 3-3, in terms of who won.

There were three official timers in 1960 for each lane and swimmer, all timing by hand. All three timers for Devitt, in Lane 3, timed him at 55.2 seconds. The three timers for Lane 4 had timed Larson at 55.0, 55.1 and 55.1 seconds. Therefore, the timing seemed to favor Larson.

The judges then turned to the electronic back-up timer to break the tie. The electronic timing had Larson in 55.10 seconds and Devitt in 55.16 seconds, a difference of about four inches. Using both the hand times and the electronic times, Larson's time should have been listed as 55.1, with Devitt at 55.2.

After a long delay, the chief judge, Henry Runströmer of Sweden, cast the deciding vote and declared Devitt the winner. He ruled that Larson would be given a time of 55.2. However, the rules at that time did not provide for the chief judge to have a vote or give him the right to break ties. Ties were supposed to be broken by referring to the timing machine.

The U.S. team appealed, also using the proof of a *Sports Illustrated* photo that they felt clearly showed Larson winning. The appeal jury—headed by Jan de Vries (NED), also the President of the Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA) in 1960—rejected the appeal, keeping Devitt the winner.

Because they ruled Devitt the winner, this controversy sparked intense discussion about the use of electronic timing and ultimately ended in the adoption of a fully-automated electronic timing system for swimming in the 1968 Olympics.

THE ADOPTION OF ELECTRONIC TIMING INTO ALL LEVELS OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

During the early 1970s—after the breakthrough of the 1968 Olympics—there were a handful of sports timing companies around the world (Omega Timing and Swiss Timing), but none with the complete focus on swimming—except for one: Colorado Time Systems (CTS).

CTS began with four Hewlett-Packard engineers

spinning off from HP to found the company. It was then that they began manufacturing electronic timing systems exclusively for the sport of swimming.

For many veterans in the sport, it's hard to believe that it's been 40 years since CTS offered the first practical display timing, touchpad and scoreboard system to the American marketplace. It featured easy-to-read final time displays plus the first "split time" display available on a swim timer.

This first generation of timing was a huge leap for the sport, however, it didn't solve all of the problems. It didn't store competitors' times, so humans still had to record times manually and then reset the system, losing those times forever.

A few years later, CTS created a printing timer system that incorporated a built-in paper strip printer. This printing timer instantly printed split and final times at the end of each heat. This soon became an affordable option and a standard in the sport. A shift toward automation was occurring in the sport versus human recorders and timers.

During this time, many other timing companies were trying to create timing systems for dozens of other sports, however, CTS was busy researching how they could improve its timing systems for swimming.

Colorado's second generation timer added an internal printer, which created an audit trail so meet organizers could see exactly what the real race times were months later. As the timers were used more, new features were added to meet the demand, such as adding backup batteries (in case of a power failure, the timer would keep on timing accurately, and no data would be lost). Also, CTS touchpads were updated to a non-slip material to alleviate slipping. Later versions added more memory to store thousands of races internally.

The next version of the timer added the ability to transmit times by an electronic signal to a meet management computer. This advance eliminated all human transcription of times and greatly increased the speed of getting out the full results from an event.

CTS also responded to the need for more advanced training systems and launched a complete timing training system. In 2002, relay judging platforms were introduced to add more accuracy to relay races and to automate the process. In 2004, CTS launched a complete full-color scoreboard and display division to work seamlessly with their timing systems.

A LOOK BACK AND PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

An entire generation of swimmers exists that has never known a swim meet without electronic timing, touchpads and even electronic starting horns. It's important to remember the sport's history and how swimming has evolved into what it is today.

The future of technology in swimming is dependent on the needs of the coaches and competitors and, of course, the companies willing to work shoulder-to-shoulder with them in order to improve the sport as we embark on the next 40 years. ♦



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OLYMPIC SCHEDULE : SWIMMING



[PHOTO BY LEO MASON, US PRESSWIRE]



Note: All morning races are preliminary heats. The prelims are scheduled for 10 a.m. London time, with the semifinals and finals slated for 7:30 p.m. in London. In the United States, prelims begin at 5 a.m. EDT, with semifinals and finals beginning at 2:30 p.m. EDT.

DAY 1 (Saturday, July 28) Morning Session

Men	400 IM	Prelim
Women	100 Fly	Prelim
Men	400 Free	Prelim
Women	400 IM	Prelim
Men	100 Breast	Prelim
Women	4 x 100 FR	Prelim

Evening Session

Men	400 IM	Final
Women	100 Fly	Semifinal
Men	400 Free	Final
Women	400 IM	Final
Men	100 Breast	Semifinal
Women	4 x 100 FR	Final

DAY 2 (Sunday, July 29) Morning Session

Women	100 Back	Prelim
Men	200 Free	Prelim
Women	100 Breast	Prelim
Men	100 Back	Prelim
Women	400 Free	Prelim
Men	4 x 100 FR	Prelim

Evening Session

Women	100 Fly	Final
Men	200 Free	Semifinal
Women	100 Breast	Semifinal
Men	100 Breast	Final
Women	400 Free	Final
Men	100 Back	Semifinal
Women	100 Back	Semifinal
Men	4 x 100 FR	Final

DAY 3 (Monday, July 30) Morning Session

Women	200 Free	Prelim
Men	200 Fly	Prelim
Women	200 IM	Prelim

Evening Session

Women	200 Free	Semifinal
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Men	200 Free	Final
Women	100 Back	Final
Men	100 Back	Final
Women	100 Breast	Final
Men	200 Fly	Semifinal
Women	200 IM	Semifinal

Men	100 Fly	Prelim
Women	200 Back	Prelim

Evening Session

Men	50 Free	Semifinal
Women	200 Breast	Final
Men	200 Back	Final
Women	200 Back	Semifinal
Men	200 IM	Final
Women	100 Free	Final
Men	100 Fly	Semifinal

DAY 4 (Tuesday, July 31) Morning Session

Men	100 Free	Prelim
Women	200 Fly	Prelim
Men	200 Breast	Prelim
Men	4 x 200 FR	Prelim

Evening Session

Men	100 Free	Semifinal
Women	200 Free	Final
Men	200 Fly	Final
Women	200 Fly	Semifinal
Men	200 Breast	Semifinal
Women	200 IM	Final
Men	4 x 200 FR	Final

DAY 5 (Wednesday, Aug. 1) Morning Session

Women	100 Free	Prelim
Men	200 Back	Prelim
Women	200 Breast	Prelim
Men	200 IM	Prelim
Women	4 x 200 FR	Prelim

Evening Session

Men	200 Breast	Final
Women	100 Free	Semifinal
Men	200 Back	Semifinal
Women	200 Fly	Final
Men	100 Free	Final
Women	200 Breast	Semifinal
Men	200 IM	Semifinal
Women	4 x 200 FR	Final

DAY 6 (Thursday, Aug. 2) Morning Session

Men	50 Free	Prelim
Women	800 Free	Prelim

DAY 7 (Friday, Aug. 3) Morning Session

Women	50 Free	Prelim
Men	1500 Free	Prelim
Women	4 x 100 MR	Prelim
Men	4 x 100 MR	Prelim

Evening Session

Women	200 Back	Final
Men	100 Fly	Final
Women	800 Free	Final
Men	50 Free	Final
Women	50 Free	Semifinal

DAY 8 (Saturday, Aug. 4) Morning Session

No Events Scheduled

Evening Session

Women	50 Free	Final
Men	1500 Free	Final
Women	4 x 100 MR	Final
Men	4 x 100 MR	Final

DAY 13 (Wednesday, Aug. 9) 12:00 noon London time

Women	10K Marathon	Final
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DAY 14 (Thursday, Aug. 10) 12:00 noon London time

Men	10K Marathon	Final
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[PHOTO BY DANIEL SHIREY, US PRESSWIRE]

PICTURED » *Ranomi Kromowidjojo, Netherlands*

50 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Britta Steffen, Germany

Past Champions: Kristin Otto (1988), Yang Wenyi (1992), Amy Van Dyken (1996), Inge de Bruijn (2000), Inge de Bruijn (2004), Britta Steffen (2008)

World Record: Britta Steffen, Germany, 23.73

Notable: Of the six times the 50 free has been an Olympic event, the winner has also doubled in the 100 free on three occasions. Kristin Otto pulled off the sprint double in 1988, while Inge de Bruijn (2000) and Britta Steffen (2008) also completed the sweep. Otto's performances from the 1988 Games in Seoul are tainted from suspected doping violations by East Germany's systematic program.

THE HEADLINERS

Whether there will be a title defense by Germany's **Britta Steffen** remains to be seen, as the sprint sensation has yet to reveal what is in the arsenal for 2012. What isn't a mystery is how quick and deep this event has become. For evidence, all one must do is look at the statements made by the Netherlands' **Ranomi Kromowidjojo** and Great Britain's **Fran Halsall**.

Kromowidjojo put herself in the driver's seat with a 24.10 clocking at the Eindhoven Cup, a performance that is the fastest ever in a textile suit. The Dutchwoman was the silver medalist in the 50 free at last year's World Championships and seems to be rising higher and higher. As for Halsall, she'll be the undisputed favorite of the crowd in London and boasts a personal best of

24.13, registered at the British Trials. Halsall just missed out on a medal at the World Champs, placing fourth.

Sweden boasts an impressive duo of **Therese Alshammar** and **Sarah Sjostrom**, with Alshammar rating as the reigning world champ. Alshammar owns a best of 24.14 and is defying age, while Sjostrom, with a full program for London, has been fast improving in the shortest sprint. Sjostrom is better suited for the 100 and 200 freestyles, along with the 100 butterfly, where she was world champion in 2009.

The United States will turn to **Jessica Hardy**, who was 24-mid at the American Trials, and **Kara Lynn Joyce**, making her third Olympic appearance. The Netherlands' **Marleen Veldhuis** will be another factor, along with the Australian sister tandem of **Cate** and **Bronte Campbell**. It will also be necessary to keep an eye on Belarus' **Aliaksandra Herasimenia** and Denmark's **Jeanette Ottesen**.

WHAT ELSE?

The possibility of a sixth Olympic appearance by **Dara Torres** vanished at the United States Olympic Trials, but credit still must go to the 45-year-old. En route to fourth at Trials, Torres produced a time of 24.82, an amazing effort for an athlete about 20 years older than most of her competition.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Ranomi Kromowidjojo, NED

Silver: Fran Halsall, GBR

Bronze: Britta Steffen, GER ♦

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Britta Steffen, Germany

Past Champions: Fanny Durack (1912), Ethelda Bleibtrey (1920), Ethel Lackie (1924), Albina Osipowich (1928), Helene Madison (1932), Rie Mastenbroek (1936), Greta Andersen (1948), Katalin Szoke (1952), Dawn Fraser (1956), Dawn Fraser (1960), Dawn Fraser (1964), Jan Henne (1968), Sandra Neilson (1972), Kornelia Ender (1976), Barbara Krause (1980), Nancy Hogshead/Carrie Steinseifer (1984), Kristin Otto (1988), Zhuang Yong (1992), Le Jingyi (1996), Inge de Bruijn (2000), Jodie Henry (2004), Britta Steffen (2008)

World Record: Britta Steffen, Germany, 52.07

Notable: When Dawn Fraser captured the gold medal in 1964, she became the first swimmer to capture an event in three consecutive Olympiads. Only Kristina Egerszegi (200 backstroke) has matched Fraser's feat.

THE HEADLINERS

The bronze medalist in the 100 free at last summer's World Championships, the Netherlands' **Ranomi Kromowidjojo**, has established herself as the top contender in an impressive field. She popped a 52.75 earlier this year, the fastest time ever produced in a textile suit. She figures to have more left in the tank for London.

Sweden's **Sarah Sjostrom**, who will tackle a full schedule at the Games, has already been 53-low this year and will find herself firmly in the medal mix. Sjostrom has shown impressive range from the 50 to 200 freestyle and has been churning out quick times throughout the year. She'll be joined in the hunt for a podium position by Great Britain's **Francesca Halsall**, who clocked 53.57 at the British Trials.

Although she is still regaining the form that made her the Olympic champion in Beijing, Germany's **Britta Steffen** can't be overlooked. She looked solid at the European Championships, a good sign for London. Meanwhile, keep an eye on Denmark's **Jeanette Ottesen** and Belarus' **Aliaksandra Herasimenia**, who shared gold at the World Champs.

The United States' **Missy Franklin**, in the middle of a hefty slate, is expected to be at the front of the field, and tabs must be kept on China's **Tang Yi** and Australia's **Melanie Schlanger** and **Cate Campbell**. **Jessica Hardy** was the winner of the 100 free at the U.S. Trials and will be looking to further her development from breast-stroke standout to sprint star.

WHAT ELSE?

Look for this event to be significantly faster than it was at the World Championships in Shanghai, where 53.45 was good for a piece of the gold medal. It wouldn't be stunning to see sub-53 be required to earn a medal.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Ranomi Kromowidjojo, NED

Silver: Sarah Sjostrom, SWE

Bronze: Britta Steffen, GER ♦



100 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

[PHOTO BY JERRY LAI, US PRESSWIRE]



PICTURED » Britta Steffen, Germany

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Federica Pellegrini, Italy

Past Champions: Debbie Meyer (1968), Shane Gould (1972), Kornelia Ender (1976), Barbara Krause (1980), Mary Wayte (1984), Heike Friedrich (1988), Nicole Haislett (1992), Claudia Poll (1996), Susie O'Neill (2000), Camelia Potec (2004), Federica Pellegrini (2008)

World Record: Federica Pellegrini, Italy, 1:52.98

Notable: Through the 2004 Olympics, this event had been relatively stagnant, without much development in the victorious Olympic times. However, the event has since boomed dramatically, thanks to the efforts of Federica Pellegrini and the previous performances of Laure Manaudou.

THE HEADLINERS

At one time, Italy's **Federica Pellegrini** was the undisputed queen of the 200 freestyle. As the defending champion and continuing to produce stellar performances, Pellegrini will be expected to defend her title admirably. However, she's going to have to navigate a mine field in order to repeat.

For starters, she needs only to look at her home continent to find a pair of big-time contenders for the gold medal. France's **Camille Muffat** has been swimming tremendously and has already dipped into the 1:54 range this year. Meanwhile, Sweden's **Sarah Sjöstrom**, a multi-event standout, has been 1:55-low and appears to have much more in her arsenal.

For the United States, **Missy Franklin** and **Allison Schmitt** will be expected to shine. Franklin had the No. 1 time in the world last year while leading off the American 800 free relay. Schmitt has been producing fast times on a regular basis and has the talent to improve on her sixth-place finish from last year's World Championships. That much was proven at the U.S. Trials when she delivered an American record of 1:54.40.

Australia will turn to the tandem of **Kylie Palmer** and **Bronte Barratt**, with Palmer the reigning silver medalist from the World Champs. Add in the Netherlands' **Femke Heemskerk**, and the field gets even better. A year ago, Heemskerk was ranked No. 2 in the world.

WHAT ELSE?

What kind of time will it take to stand on the podium? Put it this way: there won't be much shock if the three medalists are all under 1:55 and closer to popping times near 1:54-low!

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Allison Schmitt, USA

Silver: Camille Muffat, FRA

Bronze: Missy Franklin, USA ♦



200 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN



[PHOTO BY ALBERTO LINGRIA, US PRESSWIRE]

PICTURED » Federica Pellegrini, Italy

PHOTO BY GREG SMITH, US PRESSWIRE



PICTURED > *Camille Muffat, France*

400 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Rebecca Adlington, Great Britain

Past Champions: Martha Norelius (1924), Martha Norelius (1928), Helene Madison (1932), Rie Mastenbroek (1936), Ann Curtis (1948), Valeria Gyenge (1952), Lorraine Crapp (1956), Chris von Saltza (1960), Virginia Duenkel (1964), Debbie Meyer (1968), Shane Gould (1972), Petra Thumer (1976), Ines Diers (1980), Tiffany Cohen (1984), Janet Evans (1988), Dagmar Hase (1992), Michelle Smith (1996), Brooke Bennett (2000), Laure Manaudou (2004), Rebecca Adlington (2008)

World Record: Federica Pellegrini, Italy, 3:59.15

Notable: Because of the dominance and longevity of countrywoman Dawn Fraser, Australian Lorraine Crapp doesn't get the recognition she deserves. Aside from being an Olympic champion, Crapp set world records during her career in the 100, 200, 400 and 800 freestyles.

THE HEADLINERS

There was a time when this event seemed fairly wide open. Of course, that scenario could reveal itself in London. For now, though, France's **Camille Muffat** has put herself in the driver's seat, thanks to some tune-up performances that were downright eye-opening. Already this year, Muffat has gone under 4:05 on six occasions, including a best of 4:01.13.

It wouldn't be surprising, based on her results this year, if Muffat threatens the four-minute barrier, somewhere only Italian **Federica Pellegrini** has visited. Who else can go that low remains a question, but Pellegrini,

the reigning world champ, is a possibility. Four years ago, she was the favorite in this race, but flamed out in the final, only to rebound with gold in the 200 free.

The defending champion, Great Britain's **Rebecca Adlington** will be a certain factor in the battle for medals, as she has been 4:02 this season. She'll be joined by the Aussie pair of **Kylie Palmer** and **Bronte Barratt**. While Muffat is the leading French hope, her country will also count on **Coralie Balmy** for a strong showing. Spain's **Mireia Belmonte**, who has multiple event options, is also a contender.

The United States group is strong, headlined by **Allison Schmitt**. A contender for the gold medal in the 200 free, Schmitt was 4:02 at the American Trials, winning easily and going wire to wire. The second spot is occupied by **Chloe Sutton**, the former open water star who has turned into a standout in the pool.

WHAT ELSE?

Two names that fly under the radar are Denmark's **Lotte Friis** and New Zealand's **Lauren Boyle**. Both women have proven themselves, especially Friis in the longer distances. Don't be stunned if one of these women finishes well up the ladder.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Camille Muffat, FRA

Silver: Allison Schmitt, USA

Bronze: Rebecca Adlington, GBR ♦



[PHOTO BY PRELOST/PRESE SPORTS VIA US PRESSWIRE]

PICTURED ▶ Rebecca Adlington, Great Britain

800 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Rebecca Adlington, Great Britain

Past Champions: Debbie Meyer (1968), Keena Rothhammer (1972), Petra Thumer (1976), Michelle Ford (1980), Tiffany Cohen (1984), Janet Evans (1988), Janet Evans (1992), Brooke Bennett (1996), Brooke Bennett (2000), Ai Shibata (2004), Rebecca Adlington (2008)

World Record: Rebecca Adlington, Great Britain, 8:14.10

Notable: When Rebecca Adlington won the gold medal at the Beijing Olympics, she didn't just collect her second title of the Games—she took down Janet Evans' long-standing world record, a mark that had stood for nearly 19 years. Prior to winning the 800 free, Adlington took top honors in the 400 freestyle.

THE HEADLINERS

Racing in front of her home fans, **Rebecca Adlington** will be the favorite to capture the gold medal. She is the defending champion and world record holder. For good measure, she won the world title last year in Shanghai. She's already been under 8:20 this year, proof that she's on target for a repeat.

Denmark's **Lotte Friis**, who won the bronze medal at the 2008 Olympics, is expected to be one of the biggest challengers to Adlington. Friis was the silver medalist at the World Champs and was less than a second

behind Adlington in Shanghai. A third European to watch is Spain's **Mireia Belmonte**, a multi-event standout whose profile has soared in the past few years.

For the United States, 15-year-old **Katie Ledecky** is in the medal hunt after breaking out at the Olympic Trials with a sub-8:20 clocking. She'll be joined by veteran **Kate Ziegler**, who is hoping to rebound from a poor performance at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

A plethora of other athletes will be in the hunt for a berth in the championship final and, perhaps, a minor medal. China will look for **Xin Xin** to excel, while **Kylie Palmer** will carry the banner for Australia. Also slated to race the 400 free in London, Palmer won the 800 free at the Aussie Trials with a time of 8:26.60.

WHAT ELSE?

Katie Ledecky isn't just a teenager with a huge upside. She has a dare-devil demeanor, which was on display at the U.S. Olympic Trials, where Ledecky blasted off the blocks and forced the competition to play catch-up—something her opposition was unable to do.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

- Gold:** Rebecca Adlington, GBR
- Silver:** Katie Ledecky, USA
- Bronze:** Lotte Friis, DEN ♦

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Natalie Coughlin, USA

Past Champions: Sybil Bauer (1924), Zus Braun (1928), Eleanor Holm (1932), Nida Senff (1936), Karen Harup (1948), Joan Harrison (1952), Judy Grinham (1956), Lynn Burke (1960), Cathy Ferguson (1964), Kaye Hall (1968), Melissa Belote (1972), Ulrike Richter (1976), Rica Reinisch (1980), Theresa Andrews (1984), Kristin Otto (1988), Kristina Egerszegi (1992), Beth Botsford (1996), Diana Mocanu (2000), Natalie Coughlin (2004), Natalie Coughlin (2008)

World Record: Gemma Spofforth, Great Britain, 58.12

Notable: When two-time defending champion Natalie Coughlin failed to qualify for this event at the U.S. Trials, she missed out on a history-making opportunity. Only Dawn Fraser (100 free) and Kristina Egerszegi (200 back) have pulled off the trifecta.

THE HEADLINERS

This event has shaped up to be one of the most tightly contested disciplines of the London Games. The American tandem, alone, is superb. While **Missy Franklin** set the American record of 58.85 at the U.S. Trials, fellow teenager **Rachel Bootsma** is close behind with a 59-low to her credit. Franklin, though, is the popular pick and could produce a time that threatens the world record.

Russia's **Anastasia Zueva** has been sub-59 this season and was the silver medalist at the past World Champs, placing behind China's **Zhao Jing**. Of course, Zhao will be a factor. Australia offers a stellar tandem in **Emily Seebohm** and **Belinda Hocking**, although Hocking is better geared toward the 200. Japan's **Aya Terakawa** is a veteran who checked in at 59.10 earlier this year.

A host of additional athletes could find their way into the championship final, such as Denmark's **Mie Nielsen** and world record holder **Gemma Spofforth** of Great Britain. Zimbabwe's **Kirsty Coventry**, who took silver behind **Natalie Coughlin** at the Beijing Games, is also to be watched.

WHAT ELSE?

An interesting storyline will be the performance of France's **Laure Manaudou**, who was the bronze medalist in the 100 backstroke at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. She put her emphasis on the backstroke events during French qualifying, a decision that paid dividends. The question is whether she can drop enough time to become a player in the medal hunt.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Missy Franklin, USA

Silver: Anastasia Zueva, RUS

Bronze: Emily Seebohm, AUS ♦



100 Meter Backstroke

BY JOHN LOHN



[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

PICTURES ♦ Missy Franklin, USA



[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

PICTURED » Missy Franklin, USA

200 Meter Backstroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Kirsty Coventry, Zimbabwe

Past Champions: Lillian Watson (1968), Melissa Belote (1972), Ulrike Richter (1976), Rica Reinisch (1980), Jolanda de Rover (1984), Kristina Egerszegi (1988), Kristina Egerszegi (1992), Kristina Egerszegi (1996), Diana Mocanu (2000), Kirsty Coventry (2004), Kirsty Coventry (2008)

World Record: Kirsty Coventry, Zimbabwe, 2:04.81

Notable: If Kirsty Coventry can win a third consecutive victory in the 200 backstroke, she would become just the third woman to three-peat in any event, and the second in this discipline. Hungarian Kristina Egerszegi was the dominant performer in the late 1980s and first half of the 1990s.

THE HEADLINERS

One of several individuals in pursuit of an Olympic triple in a specific event, **Kirsty Coventry** won't have an easy time defending her Olympic crown. Not only is Coventry rebounding from injury, but she also will be dealing with a tough field—one that is highlighted by **Missy Franklin**, the American teenage phenom.

The reigning world champion in the 200 back, Franklin nearly broke the world record in Shanghai last summer and is the favorite entering London. She'll

be joined as a medal contender by fellow American **Elizabeth Beisel**, who is also among the leading contenders for gold in the 400 individual medley.

During the early stages of Olympic qualification, Russia's **Anastasia Zueva** and Australian **Belinda Hocking** were the only women

to break the 2:07 barrier. Hocking will be joined by her countrywoman **Meagen Nay**.

For the home crowd, it will have its support behind **Elizabeth Simmonds**, who was seventh at the last World Championships. For the Dutch, it will bank on **Sharon van Rouwendaal**, who was the bronze medalist at the World Champs.

WHAT ELSE?

It's easy to discount **Kirsty Coventry** because of her physical issues and lack of impressive performances of late. However, doubting a champion can be a dangerous maneuver, and Coventry's portfolio speaks for itself. Seeing her contend would add to the event's storyline.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Missy Franklin, USA

Silver: Belinda Hocking, AUS

Bronze: Elizabeth Beisel, USA ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BUCK]

PICTURED » *Rebecca Soni, USA*



100 Meter Breaststroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Leisel Jones, Australia

Past Champions: Durdica Bjedov (1968), Catherine Carr (1972), Hannelore Anke (1976), Ute Geweniger (1980), Petra van Staveren (1984), Tanya Dangalakova (1988), Yelena Rudkovskaya (1992), Penny Heyns (1996), Megan Quann (2000), Luo Xuejuan (2004), Leisel Jones (2008)

World Record: Jessica Hardy, USA, 1:04.45

Notable: There has never been a repeat champion in this event, a feat Australia's Leisel Jones will try to pull off. Jones will be making her fourth appearance in the 100 breast, having won a medal of each color in her three Olympiads. She was the runner-up in 2000, earned bronze in 2004 and prevailed in Beijing in 2008.

THE HEADLINERS

There is a chance that the podium for the 100 breast award ceremony will have the feel of a certain Southern California club. Training under Dave Salo at Trojan Swim Club, **Rebecca Soni** and **Yuliya Efimova** will be expected to push for hardware, with Soni as the clear favorite. Soni is the reigning world champion and has separated herself from the competition in the breaststroke disciplines.

Efimova is Russia's premier breaststroker and was fourth at last summer's World Championships. Like Soni, she is equally efficient in the 100 and 200 breast-

stroke events and is comfortable on the big stage. Both Soni and Efimova can expect to be pressed by the other American in the field, NCAA collegiate champion **Breeja Larson**, who broke the 1:06 barrier at the U.S. Trials.

The veteran of the field, **Leisel Jones** is the defending champion and is gearing up for a run at a repeat. While Jones was second at the Australian Trials, her focus has been on producing her finest results at the Olympics. She'll be joined on the blocks by countrywoman **Leiston Pickett**, who qualified first in 1:06.88.

This event is heavy on depth, with **Satomi Suzuki** and **Mina Matsushima** providing Japan with a strong punch. Suzuki has been 1:06.80 this year. Canadian **Jillian Tyler** and Sweden's **Jennie Johansson** will also vie for slots in the championship final.

WHAT ELSE?

Despite the depth in this event, **Rebecca Soni** will be the heavy favorite to capture the gold medal. She won the world title last summer by more than a second and has replicated what **Leisel Jones** did in the mid-2000s, when she established a major chasm between herself and the opposition.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Rebecca Soni, USA

Silver: Leisel Jones, AUS

Bronze: Yuliya Efimova, RUS ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BUCK]

PICTURED » *Rebecca Soni, USA*



200 Meter Breaststroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Rebecca Soni, USA

Past Champions: Lucy Morton (1924), Hilde Schrader (1928), Clare Dennis (1932), Hideko Maehata (1936), Petronella van Vliet (1948), Eva Szekely (1952), Ursula Happe (1956), Anita Lonsbrough (1960), Galina Prozumenschikova (1964), Sharon Wichman (1968), Beverley Whitfield (1972), Marina Koshevaia (1976), Lina Kachushite (1980), Anne Ottenbrite (1984), Silke Horner (1988), Kyoko Iwasaki (1992), Penny Heyns (1996), Agnes Kovacs (2000), Amanda Beard (2004), Rebecca Soni (2008)

World Record: Annamay Pierse, Canada, 2:20.12

Notable: The United States' Amanda Beard, a four-time Olympian, has won a medal of each color in this event. She was the silver medalist in 1996, captured the bronze medal in 2000, and secured the gold medal in Athens in 2004.

THE HEADLINERS

It all begins with the Queen of the Breaststroke, **Rebecca Soni**, who is seeking a repeat of her Olympic title. With the exception of the 2009 World Championships, Soni has been untouchable in this race over the past four years, and anything short of another gold medal will be a shocking development. She has consistently produced fast times during the season and should be in the 2:20 range in London, if not swifter.

In the push for silver and bronze medals, Japan

features a potent tandem in **Satomi Suzuki** and **Kanako Watanabe**. Suzuki has been 2:22.99 this year, while Watanabe has checked in with a time of 2:23-mid. They will be joined in the medal picture by Russia's **Yuliya Efimova**, the silver medalist at last year's World Championships and part of the incredible training group of Dave Salo at Trojan Swim Club.

The Canadian duo of **Tera van Beilen** and **Martha McCabe**, the bronze medalist at the World Champs, is strong, while **Sun Ye** is China's top performer and the fourth-place finisher at the World Championships. The second American berth went to **Micah Lawrence**, who could find herself in the medal hunt. Among others with the chance to advance to the championship final are Russia's **Anastasia Chaun** and Denmark's **Rikke Pedersen**, who was seventh at the World Champs.

WHAT ELSE?

It's usually the United States that boasts medal contenders who don't make the Olympic team. In this event, however, it is Japan that is handcuffed by the two-person-per-event rule. Japan has eight women with sub-2:26 clockings and a quartet under 2:24!

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Rebecca Soni, USA

Silver: Yuliya Efimova, RUS

Bronze: Satomi Suzuki, JPN ♦



PICTURED ▶ Dana Vollmer, USA

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Libby Trickett, Australia

Past Champions: Shelley Mann (1956), Carolyn Schuler (1960), Sharon Stouder (1964), Lyn McClements (1968), Mayumi Aoki (1972), Kornelia Ender (1976), Caren Metschuck (1980), Mary T. Meagher (1984), Kristin Otto (1988), Qian Hong (1992), Amy Van Dyken (1996), Inge de Bruijn (2000), Petria Thomas (2004), Libby Trickett (2008)

World Record: Sarah Sjöström, Sweden, 56.06

Notable: The United States has won the 100 fly in just two of the past 11 Olympiads, with Amy Van Dyken being the latest victor for the Stars and Stripes. Meanwhile, Jenny Thompson, in 1999, is the last American to have set a world record in the event.

THE HEADLINERS

Although the United States hasn't had a great deal of success in this event, **Dana Vollmer** has the potential to change her country's fortunes. Vollmer made herself the woman to beat at last summer's World Championships when she registered a best time of 56.47 in the semifinals before holding on to win gold in the championship final. She has maintained that momentum, routinely posting fast times during mid-season competition. At the Olympic Trials, she popped a national record 56.42.

Sweden's **Sarah Sjöström** was fourth at the World Champs, but will play a huge role in determining the outcome. She's the world record holder—achieved

100 Meter Butterfly

BY JOHN LOHN

during the high-tech suit era—but has proven her worth in textile and will certainly give Vollmer a major fight. Meanwhile, Australia's **Alicia Coutts** will contend for gold, having won silver at the World Championships while breaking the 57-second threshold.

The home nation will be well represented, thanks to the presence of **Ellen Gandy** and **Fran Halsall**. Gandy was fifth at Worlds and, given her prowess in the 200 fly, shouldn't have any trouble making a surge late in the race. China's **Lu Ying**, who won the bronze medal at the World Champs, will make additional noise.

As its second option behind Coutts, Australia will turn to **Jessicah Schipper**, who edged out **Libby Trickett**, the reigning Olympic champion, for a berth to London. Holland's **Inge Dekker** has the ability to advance to the championship final, along with Japan's **Yuka Kato**.

WHAT ELSE?

What is the possibility of a performance pushing the 56-second barrier? It might sound like a real reach, but with the way Vollmer and Sjöström have looked, especially during training, it might not be out of the question.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Sarah Sjöström, SWE

Silver: Dana Vollmer, USA

Bronze: Alicia Coutts, AUS ♦



PHOTO BY OSPOrts VIA US PRESSWIRE

PICTURED » Jiao Liuyang, China

200 Meter Butterfly

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Liu Zige, China

Past Champions: Ada Kok (1968), Karen Moe (1972), Andrea Pollack (1976), Ines Geissler (1980), Mary T. Meagher (1984), Kathleen Nord (1988), Summer Sanders (1992), Susie O'Neill (1996), Misty Hyman (2000), Otylia Jędrzejczak (2004), Liu Zige (2008)

World Record: Liu Zige, China, 2:01.81

Notable: How dominant was Mary T. Meagher in the 200 fly? Well, she held the world record in the event from 1979-2000, and her 2:06.90 victory at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles was by 3.66 seconds. While the Eastern Bloc nations boycotted those Games, Meagher wasn't going to be pushed.

THE HEADLINERS

A year ago, China's **Liu Zige**—the world record holder and defending Olympic champion in the 200 fly—would have been pegged as the favorite to capture the gold medal. However, she didn't perform well at the Chinese Nationals in early April, and her form is questionable.

Even without Liu in peak form, China is in very good shape in this event. **Jiao Liuyang** has already clocked 2:05-low this season and was the silver medalist at the 2008 Olympics. She is also the defending world champion, but will find herself challenged by the likes of Japan's **Natsumi Hoshi**. The fourth-place finisher at last year's Worlds, Hoshi has been 2:04-mid

this season and appears poised for a major international breakthrough.

For the home nation, **Ellen Gandy** and **Jemma Lowe** carry the British banner. Coming off a silver medal at the World Champs, Gandy expects to be in the medal mix and will—like her countrymates—have the home crowd behind her. Lowe has some work to do to get into medal contention, but shouldn't be counted out.

The former world record holder and a longtime staple on the podium in the distance fly, Australia's **Jessicah Schipper** will try to shine when it matters the most. Meanwhile, Spain's **Mireia Belmonte** and Hungary's **Katinka Hosszu** will have busy schedules in London, and each is capable of winning multiple medals, including hardware in the 200 fly.

WHAT ELSE?

There wasn't any mention of the United States in the previous section of this event preview because no American women advanced to the final of this event at the World Championships. Still, that doesn't mean a few individuals won't surge at the right moment. That role will need to be filled in London by **Cammie Adams** and **Kathleen Hersey**.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Natsumi Hoshi, JPN

Silver: Ellen Gandy, GBR

Bronze: Katinka Hosszu, HUN ♦



200 Meter Individual Medley

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Stephanie Rice, Australia

Past Champions: Claudia Kolb (1968), Shane Gould (1972), Tracy Caulkins (1984), Daniela Hunger (1988), Lin Li (1992), Michelle Smith (1996), Yana Klochkova (2000), Yana Klochkova (2004), Stephanie Rice (2008)

World Record: Ariana Kukors, USA, 2:06.15

Notable: The world record, posted by Ariana Kukors at the 2009 World Championships and at the height of the high-tech suit era, is widely considered to be untouchable. While several techsuit standards are expected to tumble soon, this world mark is nearly three seconds quicker than anyone has been in a textile suit.

THE HEADLINERS

A wide-open field will battle it out in this event. However, if there is a slight favorite, it would be China's **Ye Shiwen**, the reigning world champion, who left her competition flailing last summer with a stunning freestyle leg. With that kind of finishing speed, she will be a real danger.

Australia brings a powerful tandem to the table, headlined by **Stephanie Rice**, who is out to defend her Olympic title. She was fourth at Worlds, but has looked sharper in 2012 and is positioned to challenge for gold. However, one of her biggest rivals will be countrywoman **Alicia Coutts**, who was the silver medalist at the World Champs.

The American arsenal looks to be in good shape with **Ariana Kukors** and **Caitlin Leverenz**, the women who represented the United States in international action last summer. Kukors was the bronze medalist at Worlds, and Leverenz was fifth. For Kukors, this has been a long-awaited Olympic berth.

Hungarian **Katinka Hosszu** was sixth at Worlds and has enjoyed a strong preparation campaign, while Great Britain's **Hannah Miley**, like Hosszu, is a contender for medals in both medley disciplines. Also, don't sleep on Spain's **Mireia Belmonte**, whose performances seem to get better with each passing month.

WHAT ELSE?

Zimbabwe's **Kirsty Coventry** gave **Stephanie Rice** all she could handle at the Beijing Games before settling for the silver medal. It will be interesting to see what Coventry can muster this time around and whether she puts herself in the medal chase.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Ye Shiwen, CHN

Silver: Stephanie Rice, AUS

Bronze: Alicia Coutts, AUS ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

PICTURED » Caitlin Leverenz, USA



[PHOTO BY PETER H. BECK]



PICTURED » Elizabeth Beisel (left) and Caitlin Leverenz, USA

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Stephanie Rice, Australia

Past Champions: Donna de Varona (1964), Claudia Kolb (1968), Gail Neall (1972), Ulrike Tauber (1976), Petra Schneider (1980), Tracy Caulkins (1984), Janet Evans (1988), Kristina Egerszegi (1992), Michelle Smith (1996), Yana Klochkova (2000), Yana Klochkova (2004), Stephanie Rice (2008)

World Record: Stephanie Rice, Australia, 4:29.45

Notable: If Stephanie Rice can repeat her title from Beijing, she'll join Yana Klochkova as the only women to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals in the 400 IM. Klochkova did it in 2000 and 2004 while also repeating in the 200 IM—a feat that Rice will be trying to do this year.

THE HEADLINERS

With an incredibly deep field, this event could be one of the most hotly contested in London. If there is a favorite, it would be USA's **Elizabeth Beisel**, who won the world title last summer by more than two seconds with her 4:31.78. En route to that triumph, she had to fend off challenges from runners-up **Stephanie Rice** of Australia and **Hannah Miley** of Great Britain.

Rice prevailed four years ago, dueling with Zimbabwe's **Kirsty Coventry**. Although injuries have plagued Rice in recent years, she is peaking at the perfect time, evidenced by her time of 4:33.45 from the Australian Trials. Coventry, however, is a wildcard,

400 Meter Individual Medley

BY JOHN LOHN

with uncertainty surrounding her ability to match her past levels of success. Meanwhile, Miley was the victor at the British Trials, delivering a mark of 4:32.67.

Hungarian **Katinka Hosszu**, who has been 4:32.83 this year, will also contend for gold. She has benefited from her training at the University of Southern California and Trojan Swim Club under the watch of Dave Salo. Another European, Spain's **Mireia Belmonte** has already been in the 4:33 range this season, and China's **Li Xuanxu** and **Ye Shiwen** warrant attention.

Caitlin Leverenz qualified second at the U.S. Trials, as did **Blair Evans** at the Aussie Trials. Evans, though, will need to get considerably faster than the 4:36 she managed to earn her trip to London.

WHAT ELSE?

Only **Stephanie Rice** and **Kirsty Coventry** have managed to crack the 4:30 barrier, and that was during the high-tech suit era. However, it might require a sub-4:30 clocking just to medal in London. The battle in prelims to qualify for the top eight in the championship final will be intriguing, as there will be limited opportunities to ease off the pace and conserve energy.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Elizabeth Beisel, USA

Silver: Stephanie Rice, AUS

Bronze: Hannah Miley, GBR ♦



[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

PICTURED > Rachel Bootsma, USA

400
Meter
Medley
Relay
BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Australia

Past Champions: United States (1960), United States (1964), United States (1968), United States (1972), East Germany (1976), East Germany (1980), United States (1984), East Germany (1988), United States (1992), United States (1996), United States (2000), Australia (2004), Australia (2008)

World Record: China (Zhao Jing, Chen Huijia, Jiao Liuyang, Li Zhesi), 3:52.19

Notable: Only three nations—the United States, East Germany and Australia—have won Olympic gold in this event. At the World Championships, four countries have earned the gold medal at one point or another, with China joining the aforementioned trio.

THE HEADLINERS

The **United States**, fueled by its dominant victory at last summer's World Championships, is the favorite to end Australia's two-Olympiad stranglehold on the gold medal. The American coaching staff will have numerous options available, including the use of Missy Franklin on either the backstroke leg or freestyle leg. If Rachel Bootsma takes care of the backstroke, then Franklin goes to the anchor position. In the middle, Rebecca Soni and Dana Vollmer are headliners in the breaststroke and butterfly. Then again, Franklin could lead off, with Jessica Hardy anchoring.

In its quest for a third straight title, **Australia** will go to battle with a stout squad, which includes Emily Seebohm

off the front and turning matters over to Leisel Jones. Alicia Coutts figures to handle the butterfly leg before Cate Campbell or Melanie Schlanger close out the race. The freestyle will be the key leg for the Aussies if they want to maintain their Olympic gold.

China was the silver medalist at the World Championships and should be a medal factor, even if there are a few question marks about its quartet. Among the uncertainties are who will handle the butterfly leg between Lu Ying and Jiao Liuyang. Whatever China brings to the blocks, however, will be a force worthy of medal contention.

In **Russia** and **Japan**, both countries feature extremely strong legs in certain areas, but are likely missing the complete package. Russia will rely on Anastasia Zueva and Yuliya Efimova to cruise during the opening half of the race, but holding on will be troublesome. As for Japan, Aya Terakawa, Satomi Suzuki and Yuka Kato account for 75 percent of a powerful relay. The question mark is the freestyle leg.

WHAT ELSE?

A handful of other nations, including **Great Britain** and **Canada**, have solid pieces, but lack a complete squad—even more than Japan and Russia.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: United States

Silver: Australia

Bronze: China ♦



PICTURED » Jessica Hardy, USA

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

400
Meter
Freestyle
Relay
BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion:

Netherlands

Past Champions: Great Britain (1912), United States (1920), United States (1924), United States (1928), United States (1932), Netherlands (1936), United States (1948), Hungary (1952), Australia (1956), United States (1960), United States (1964), United States (1968), United States (1972), United States (1976), East Germany (1980), United States (1984), East Germany (1988), United States (1992), United States (1996), United States (2000), Australia (2004), Netherlands (2008)

World Record: Netherlands (Inge Dekker, Ranomi Kromowidjojo, Femke Heemskerk, Marleen Veldhuis), 3:31.72

Notable: The United States has never gone three consecutive Olympiads without collecting the gold medal in this event. If the U.S. fails to win this summer in London, that streak will come to an end, as Australia and the Netherlands have prevailed at the past two Olympics.

THE HEADLINERS

The **Netherlands** has won the gold medal at the last three major international competitions, and there is every reason to expect the Dutch will contend for the title in London. Holland returns its lineup from the Beijing Games and could boast the X-factor in Ranomi Kromowidjojo, currently the premier sprinter in the world.

At last year's World Championships, the **United States** came within a half-second of the Dutch and will look to close that gap. Missy Franklin and Allison Schmitt figure to be the primary fuel for the American squad, with Jessica Hardy another key component to a team that is well balanced.

Germany, China and **Australia** occupied the third-through-fifth slots at the World Champs, but there's good news for the Germans. Britta Steffen, the defending Olympic champ in the 50 and 100 freestyles, was off her normal form in Shanghai, but Germany still managed to get the job done. Now that Steffen is looking stronger, that's a big boost for her country.

Tang Yi will be the force behind the Chinese squad, which always seems to rise to the occasion at the big meets. As for Australia, it will look to the likes of Cate Campbell and Melanie Schlanger to be in the medal picture.

WHAT ELSE?

Australian stalwart Libby Trickett qualified for relay duty, grabbing the fifth spot at her Olympic Trials. It will be interesting to see if Trickett is fast enough to earn a spot on the relay for the championship final.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Netherlands

Silver: United States

Bronze: Australia ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BUCK]



PICTURED » Allison Schmitt, USA

**800
Meter
Freestyle
Relay**
BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Australia

Past Champions: United States (1996), United States (2000), United States (2004), Australia (2008)

World Record: China (Yang Yu, Zhu Qianwei, Liu Jing, Pang Jiaying), 7:42.08

Notable: It would have been nice if this event had been added to the Olympic schedule prior to 1996, thus giving the likes of Australia's Dawn Fraser the chance at another medal to add to her storied legacy.

THE HEADLINERS

Heading into London, the **United States** will be the favorite for the gold medal in an event that routinely offers shifts in momentum. Coming off a victory at the World Championships last summer in Shanghai, the USA will benefit from a spectacular 1-2 combination: Missy Franklin and Allison Schmitt. Both women will be in the mix for individual medals in the 200 free and will be asked to unload in relay duty as well.

Aside from Franklin and Schmitt, Dana Vollmer will be on the relay for the championship final. As for other nations, **Australia** will have a dangerous unit, paced by Kylie Palmer and Bronte Barratt. Melanie Schlanger is expected to handle another leg, while Stephanie Rice did enough at the Aussie Trials in the semifinal round

to warrant a position in London.

Regardless of the team it fields for the Olympic Games, **China** will have a foursome capable of securing a medal and, potentially, pushing for gold. Tang Yi and Pang Jiaying have been consistent performers for the Chinese. With Camille Muffat on the roster, **France** has a loaded gun to power its chances, and **Hungary** has several capable women of coming together to threaten for a minor medal.

On its home soil, **Great Britain** should be able to put together a solid quartet. Caitlin McClatchey and Rebecca Turner provide an immediate spark. For **Canada**, it will rely on the likes of Barbara Jardin.

WHAT ELSE?

It will be interesting to see if the **Netherlands** can piece together a team capable of making a little noise in the 800-free relay. While Femke Heemskerk is an established performer in the 200 free, she's going to need significant help for the Dutch to do anything noteworthy.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: United States

Silver: Australia

Bronze: China ♦



[PHOTO BY PREVOST/PRESSE SPORTS VIA US PRESSWIRE]

PICTURED » Cesar Cielo, Brazil

50 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Cesar Cielo, Brazil

Past Champions: Matt Biondi (1988), Alexander Popov (1992), Alexander Popov (1996), Anthony Ervin/Gary Hall Jr. (2000), Gary Hall Jr. (2004), Cesar Cielo (2008)

World Record: Cesar Cielo, Brazil, 20.91

Notable: One of the best medal ceremonies from the Beijing Games was the one held for Cesar Cielo. As the Brazilian national anthem played, Cielo could not contain his tears and broke into clear sobbing while on the top step of the podium. It was a beautiful moment in which an athlete showed how much it meant not only to excel on the biggest stage, but also to appreciate what his victory meant to his country.

THE HEADLINERS

It would be ridiculous to suggest anyone for favorite status other than **Cesar Cielo**, who has dominated this event for several years. Not only is he the reigning Olympic champion and world record holder, but he has also won back-to-back world titles. At last summer's World Champs, Cielo took the crown by almost 4-tenths of a second—a huge margin for a one-lap event. Cielo's countryman, **Bruno Fratus**, will also be expected to be in the medal picture.

Since Frenchman **Fred Bousquet** surprisingly failed to qualify for the 50, Australian youngster **James Magnussen** and American **Anthony Ervin** figure to

be Cielo's main competition. While Magnussen is the heavy favorite in the 100, he is still developing in the 50. As for Ervin—who shared the Olympic gold medal with Gary Hall Jr. in 2000—his comeback story has been unreal. He finished second at the U.S. Trials in 21.60, a career best and just off the 21.59 of **Cullen Jones**, whose time ranks second in the world.

For the French, which saw Bousquet and **Alain Bernard** knocked off, **Amaury Leveaux** and **Florent Manaudou** will hold their country's hopes. Leveaux was also slated to contest the 200 free, but opted against the event in order to conserve energy for the 400 free relay.

Other contenders figure to be Aussie **Eamon Sullivan** (who has been battling numerous injuries in recent years), **George Bovell** of Trinidad & Tobago and Canadian **Brent Hayden**.

WHAT ELSE?

Keep an eye on Russian **Andrey Grechin**, who had a strong performance at the Russian nationals in April. His 21.82 ranks ninth in the world. Meanwhile, veteran **Roland Schoeman** will once again represent South Africa and put his pure speed to the test on the biggest stage in sports.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Cesar Cielo, BRA

Silver: Anthony Ervin, USA

Bronze: James Magnussen, AUS ♦

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Alain Bernard, France

Past Champions: Alfred Hajos (1896), Charles Daniels (1908), Duke Kahanamoku (1912), Duke Kahanamoku (1920), Johnny Weissmuller (1924), Johnny Weissmuller (1928), Yasuji Miyazaki (1932), Ferenc Csik (1936), Walter Ris (1948), Clarke Scholes (1952), Jon Henricks (1956), John Devitt (1960), Don Schollander (1964), Michael Wenden (1968), Mark Spitz (1972), Jim Montgomery (1976), Jorg Woithe (1980), Rowdy Gaines (1984), Matt Biondi (1988), Alexander Popov (1992), Alexander Popov (1996), Pieter van den Hoogenband (2000), Pieter van den Hoogenband (2004), Alain Bernard (2008)

World Record: Cesar Cielo, Brazil, 46.91

Notable: A new champion will be crowned in this event after Frenchman Alain Bernard failed to qualify for the London Games in his prime event. Bernard, however, is expected to represent France in the 400 free relay.

THE HEADLINERS

The 100 free can be examined from many angles, but one outcome is apparent: it's **James Magnussen's** to lose. Yes, the Australian youngster has been so dominant that it's difficult to foresee anyone else on top of the podium. Magnussen, the reigning world champion, tops the world rankings with a 47.10—easily the fastest in textile.

He will be joined in the event by countryman **James Roberts**, who swam 47.63 at Trials. That performance was a major jump for Roberts and a sign of big things ahead for Australian swimming. In the hunt for the silver medal, Roberts will be joined by the likes of France's **Yannick Agnel** and American **Nathan Adrian**.

Russia presents a formidable duo in **Danila Izotov** and **Nikita Lobintsev**, while **Cesar Cielo**, the world record holder, is lurking as the No. 1 force from Brazil. A name that has not received enough credit during the lead-up to the Games has been **Brent Hayden's**, the Canadian star who was the silver medalist at last year's World Champs. Hayden typically performs well under pressure, a trait that could prove beneficial in London. France's second qualifier is **Fabien Gilot**, and the United States will bring another solid performer to the mix in **Cullen Jones**.

As impressive as those who will be competing in the 100 is the list of athletes who failed to qualify for the event, including **Andrey Grechin** of Russia and Australia's **Matt Targett**.

WHAT ELSE?

One of the big questions of the Olympics will be whether **James Magnussen** can break into the 46-second range and challenge **Cesar Cielo's** world record of 46.91. Given that Magnussen was 47.10 at the Australian Trials, it appears he has that type of performance in his arsenal.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: James Magnussen, AUS

Silver: Yannick Agnel, FRA

Bronze: James Roberts, AUS ♦

100
Meter
Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

PICTURED » James Magnussen,
Australia

[PHOTO BY OSPOITS VIA US PRESSWIRE]



[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]

PICTURED » Ryan Lochte, USA

200 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Michael Phelps, USA

Past Champions: Fred Lane (1900), Michael Wenden (1968), Mark Spitz (1972), Bruce Furniss (1976), Sergey Kopljakov (1980), Michael Gross (1984), Duncan Armstrong (1988), Evgeni Sadovyi (1992), Danyon Loader (1996), Pieter van den Hoogenband (2000), Ian Thorpe (2004), Michael Phelps (2008)

World Record: Paul Biedermann, Germany, 1:42.00

Notable: The last three winners of this event—Pieter van den Hoogenband, Ian Thorpe and Michael Phelps—have combined for a total of 32 Olympic medals. Phelps has accounted for 16 of those medals, with Thorpe checking in at nine and van den Hoogenband sitting at seven.

THE HEADLINERS

The 200 freestyle could be the premier event of the London Games, given the star power and depth that will be on display. For starters, the United States will offer the talent of **Ryan Lochte**, the defending world champion who held off **Michael Phelps** for that title. Phelps, however, will not get a shot at revenge as he decided to scratch this event after the U.S. Trials, opting instead to get additional rest for his seven-event program.

Beyond Lochte, the duo of South Korea's **Tae Hwan Park** and China's **Sun Yang** will be dangerous. Park was the silver medalist in the 200 at the Beijing Olympics and finished fourth at last year's World

Champs, just shy of the bronze medal. As for Sun, he's the favorite to win gold in the 1500, but he also possesses the speed necessary to contend in the 200.

After he won the 2009 world title—with the aid of a high-tech suit—Germany's **Paul Biedermann** was vilified in some circles as being merely a techsuit swimmer. However, he proved his worth at last summer's World Champs by taking the bronze medal.

Another medal contender is France's **Yannick Agnel**, a rising star in the freestyle events who placed fifth in the 200 at Worlds. Others include Japan's **Takeshi Matsuda** and Russian **Danila Izotov**. Also keep an eye on Australia's **Thomas Fraser-Holmes** and **Ricky Berens**, who received an individual berth after Phelps bowed out.

The semifinals of this event should be extremely quick due to the difficulty of landing a spot in the championship final.

WHAT ELSE?

The longer this event is examined, the more it seems a 1:43 clocking will be needed for a medal. It doesn't seem as if anything in the 1:44 range will be good enough for the podium—unlike the scenario that unfolded at the World Champs in Shanghai.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

- Gold:** Ryan Lochte, USA
- Silver:** Tae Hwan Park, KOR
- Bronze:** Yannick Agnel, FRA ♦

[PHOTO BY KYLE TERADA, US PRESSWIRE]

PICTURED » Tae Hwan Park, Korea



400 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Tae Hwan Park, Korea

Past Champions: Henry Taylor (1908), George Hodgson (1912), Norman Ross (1920), Johnny Weissmuller (1924), Alberto Zorrilla (1928), Buster Crabbe (1932), Jack Medica (1936), William Smith (1948), Jean Boiteux (1952), Murray Rose (1956), Murray Rose (1960), Don Schollander (1964), Mike Burton (1968), Brad Cooper (1972), Brian Goodell (1976), Vladimir Salnikov (1980), George DiCarlo (1984), Uwe Dassler (1988), Evgeni Sadovyi (1992), Danyon Loader (1996), Ian Thorpe (2000), Ian Thorpe (2004), Tae Hwan Park (2008)

World Record: Paul Biedermann, Germany, 3:40.07

Notable: Australian Murray Rose, the champion of the 400 freestyle in 1956 and 1960, passed away earlier this year. Let's hope that as this event is contested in London, Rose's excellence and contributions to the sport will be recognized.

THE HEADLINERS

Unlike the 200 freestyle, where the field is stacked at the top, the 400 freestyle figures to generate a head-to-head showdown between Korea's **Tae Hwan Park** and China's **Sun Yang**. Both men have been performing well in the lead-up to the London Games and should have big performances to unload.

Not only is Park the defending Olympic champion, but he also secured the world title last summer by defeating Sun, the silver medalist. While Park has been

an impressive 3:44 this year, Sun holds the top time in the world with a sterling 3:42.31 from April. Many have been wondering if the 3:40 barrier could be broken when these two square off.

Germany's **Paul Biedermann**, who set the world record of 3:40.07 during the tech-suit era, was the bronze medalist at the World Championships—proof that he is more than a tech-suit swimmer. However, if he wants to contend with his Asian rivals, he'll have to drop his time considerably.

American **Peter Vanderkaay** and Canadian **Ryan Cochrane**, who were fourth and fifth at Worlds, will be battling with Biedermann for the bronze medal, along with Tunisia's **Ous Mellouli**. Cochrane and Mellouli are better geared toward the 1500, slated for the last night of competition. The second American is **Conor Dywer**, who is rapidly becoming a multi-event standout.

WHAT ELSE?

One of the more disappointing storylines surrounding this event is the absence of China's **Zhang Lin** from the competition. Zhang, the silver medalist at the Beijing Games, struggled mightily this year and, despite several attempts, never managed to produce a performance that made him worthy of a trip to London.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Sun Yang, CHN

Silver: Tae Hwan Park, KOR

Bronze: Paul Biedermann, GER ♦

[PHOTO BY OSPIRITS VIA US PRESSWIRE]



PICTURED » Sun Yang, China

1500 Meter Freestyle

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Ous Mellouli, Tunisia

Past Champions: Henry Taylor (1908), George Hodgson (1912), Norman Ross (1920), Andrew Charlton (1924), Arne Borg (1928), Kusuo Kitamura (1932), Noboru Terada (1936), James McLane (1948), Ford Konno (1952), Murray Rose (1956), John Konrads (1960), Bob Windle (1964), Mike Burton (1968), Mike Burton (1972), Brian Goodell (1976), Vladimir Salnikov (1980), Michael O'Brien (1984), Vladimir Salnikov (1988), Kieren Perkins (1992), Kieren Perkins (1996), Grant Hackett (2000), Grant Hackett (2004), Ous Mellouli (2008)

World Record: Sun Yang, China, 14:34.14

Notable: The history of the 1500 freestyle has been incredibly rich for Australia, which boasts eight gold medals in Olympic competition. The likes of Murray Rose, Kieren Perkins and Grant Hackett all rank as some of the greatest distance freestylers in history.

THE HEADLINERS

The conversation concerning the favorite for Olympic gold starts and stops with China's **Sun Yang**, the distance phenom who is continually improving and excels from the 200 distance on up. In capturing the gold medal at last year's World Championships, Sun used a phenomenal finish to check in with a world record performance of 14:34.14.

A trio of names jumps out in the tier below the Chinese superstar. Tunisia's **Ous Mellouli** is the reign-

ing Olympic champion, thanks to a victory over legend **Grant Hackett**, but he will need to be much better than he was four years ago if he plans on pushing Sun. Canada's **Ryan Cochrane**, the silver medalist at Worlds and bronze medalist in Beijing, has been a consistent performer on the international stage.

The third individual with prospects of giving Sun a battle is Korea's **Tae Hwan Park**. Although he is better known for his prowess in the 200 and 400—the latter event landing him a gold medal at the 2008 Olympics—Park swam 14:47.38 earlier this year. Still, it is not a guarantee that he'll contest the race.

From the Faroe Islands, **Pal Joensen** has etched out a quality portfolio on the international scene and was fourth at Worlds. Also in contention for a medal will be Hungarian **Gergo Kis**, who was the bronze medalist at the World Champs in 14:45.66. For the United States, **Andrew Gemmell** and **Connor Jaeger** will carry the American hopes.

WHAT ELSE?

It will be interesting to see what **Sun Yang** will be chasing when he races the 1500 free on the last day of Olympic competition. At that point, he could have already won medals in the 200 and 400 freestyles.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Sun Yang, CHN

Silver: Ryan Cochrane, CAN

Bronze: Ous Mellouli, TUN ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BUCK]



PHOTO BY Matt Grevers, USA

100 Meter Backstroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Aaron Peirsol, USA

Past Champions: Arno Bieberstein (1908), Harry Hebner (1912), Warren Kealoha (1920), Warren Kealoha (1924), George Kojac (1928), Masaji Kiyokawa (1932), Adolph Kiefer (1936), Allen Stack (1948), Yoshinobu Oyakawa (1952), David Theile (1956), David Theile (1960), Roland Matthes (1968), Roland Matthes (1972), John Naber (1976), Bengt Baron (1980), Rick Carey (1984), Daichi Suzuki (1988), Mark Tewksbury (1992), Jeff Rouse (1996), Lenny Krayzelburg (2000), Aaron Peirsol (2004), Aaron Peirsol (2008)

World Record: Aaron Peirsol, USA, 51.94

Notable: There will be a new champion in this event due to the retirement of Aaron Peirsol, which ended his quest for a third straight Olympic crown. Aside from winning a pair of gold medals in the 100 back, Peirsol was the Olympic champion in the 200 back in 2004 and earned silver medals in that event in 2000 and 2008.

THE HEADLINERS

With **Aaron Peirsol** exiting the sport and not around to defend his gold medals from the past two Olympiads, a door has been flung wide open. If there are favorites, however, they would be the United States' **Matt Grevers** and France's **Camille Lacourt**. Grevers had a huge performance at the American Trials, clocking 52.08—the second fastest time in history.

Lacourt, the top-ranked 100 backstroker the past

couple of years, shared the gold medal at the World Championships last year with countryman **Jeremy Stravius**, but Stravius failed to make the Olympic team in his best event. Lacourt is pure speed and will try to set the pace from the get-go.

Japan's **Ryosuke Irie** was the bronze medalist at Worlds and will be in medal contention, but Irie is better suited for the 200 back, where he's expected to duel with **Ryan Lochte**. Also look for another speedster, Great Britain's **Liam Tancock**, to be in the mix. He was sixth at Worlds and has been 53.16 this year.

Also keep an eye on Australia's **Hayden Stoeckel** and Russian **Arkady Vyatchanin**, who shared bronze in Beijing. New Zealand's **Gareth Kean** and the German duo of **Jan-Philip Glania** and **Helge Meeuw** also will battle for championship final berths.

WHAT ELSE?

It will be interesting to see how far Russia's **Vladimir Morozov** can advance. Although he is best known for his prowess in the 50 and 100 freestyles, Morozov's individual qualification came in the backstroke. Morozov, who attends the University of Southern California, could one day represent the United States in international competition.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Matt Grevers, USA

Silver: Camille Lacourt, FRA

Bronze: Ryosuke Irie, JPN ♦

Picture: Ryan Lochte, USA

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BUCK]



200 Meter Backstroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Ryan Lochte, USA

Past Champions: Ernst Hoppenberg (1900), Jed Graef (1964), Roland Matthes (1968), Roland Matthes (1972), John Naber (1976), Sandor Wladar (Hungary), Rick Carey (1984), Igor Polianski (1988), Martin Zubero (1992), Brad Bridgewater (1996), Lenny Krayzelburg (2000), Aaron Peirsol (2004), Ryan Lochte (2008)

World Record: Aaron Peirsol, USA, 1:51.92

Notable: An American victory in this event would make it five straight Olympiads in which the United States has prevailed in the men's 200 back. Conversely, the United States women have not had a 200 backstroke champion since Melissa Belote in 1972.

THE HEADLINERS

Four years ago in Beijing, there was considerable hype over this event because of the impending duel between **Ryan Lochte** and **Aaron Peirsol**. This time around, there isn't as much luster because Peirsol, perhaps the greatest backstroker in history, has retired, and Lochte is considered a heavy favorite.

Of any of the events in the Lochte arsenal, this one might be the one in which he has the biggest cushion over the rest of the world—although a few might argue that fact in light of a certain Japanese standout. Lochte's best time of 1:52.96, posted en route to gold

at the 2011 World Championships, is the fastest textile time ever recorded. No one has shown the ability to get anywhere near that mark.

Thanks to his flawless form, Japan's **Ryosuke Irie** is touted as the biggest challenger to Lochte. He captured the silver medal at Worlds, clocking 1:54.11. Irie nearly cracked 1:54 at the Japanese Trials and figures to be in a battle with the United States' **Tyler Clary** for the silver medal. Clary was the bronze medalist at the World Champs and gives the U.S. a potent 1-2 combination.

Several other athletes will be battling to be in the medal picture, but will find the going extremely difficult. Nonetheless, it's worth keeping an eye on China's **Zhang Fenglin**, Russia's **Arkady Vyatchanin**, Japan's **Kazuki Watanabe** and France's **Ben Stasiulis**.

WHAT ELSE?

There are certain world records from the tech-suit era that will likely stand longer than others. One of those marks is the global standard in the 200 back, which belongs to **Aaron Peirsol** at 1:51.92. That performance is sensational and could be on the books for many years ahead.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Ryan Lochte, USA

Silver: Ryosuke Irie, JPN

Bronze: Tyler Clary, USA ♦



PICTURED » *Kosuke Kitajima, Japan*

[PHOTO BY MARK J. REBILAS, US PRESSWIRE]

100 Meter Breaststroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Kosuke Kitajima, Japan

Past Champions: Don McKenzie (1968), Nobutaka Taguchi (1972), John Hencken (1976), Duncan Goodhew (1980), Steve Lundquist (1984), Adrian Moorhouse (1988), Nelson Diebel (1992), Fred DeBurghgraeve (1996), Domenico Fioravanti (2000), Kosuke Kitajima (2004), Kosuke Kitajima (2008)

World Record: Brenton Rickard, Australia, 58.58

Notable: Depending on Michael Phelps' success in the 400 individual medley, Kosuke Kitajima could become the first man to win an Olympic title in the same event three straight times. Kitajima also has the chance to pull off a three-peat in the 200 breast.

THE HEADLINERS

Japan's **Kosuke Kitajima** is the two-time defending Olympic champion, and he showed that he won't be easily defeated in London, popping a time of 58.90 at his Trials—slightly faster than his winning time from the Beijing Games. Kitajima has long been known for flourishing when it matters most.

Norway's **Alexander Dale Oen**, who was the silver medalist at the 2008 Games, was expected to give Kitajima all he could handle, but Dale Oen tragically died of cardiac arrest earlier in the year while training at altitude in Arizona. He was the reigning world champion and the fastest ever in a textile suit.

The United States has been lacking in this event for a few years, but the return of **Brendan Hansen** has been a huge positive. Hansen won national titles last summer in both breaststrokes, then followed with a 59.67 at the U.S. Trials. The four-time Olympic medalist is mentally refreshed and feeling good about his progress, which is a key to his push for Olympic gold. He'll be joined by countryman

Eric Shanteau.

The likes of Italy's **Fabio Scozzoli** and Brazil's **Felipe Silva** will be factors, with Scozzoli the reigning silver medalist from Worlds, and Silva having gone 59-mid in April. Japan's **Ryo Tateishi** is the No. 2 performer from Japan and a medal threat, along with South Africa's **Cameron van der Burgh** and Australians **Brenton Rickard** and **Christian Sprenger**.

WHAT ELSE?

Brendan Hansen's return to prominence is not just a quality storyline for him individually, but is a key for the United States in terms of the 400 medley relay. With the rest of the world getting stronger and threatening the Americans, Hansen provides a serious boost to the weakest leg of the relay.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Kosuke Kitajima, JPN

Silver: Cameron van der Burgh, RSA

Bronze: Brendan Hansen, USA ♦



PICTURED » Scott Weltz, USA

200 Meter Breaststroke

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Kosuke Kitajima, Japan

Past Champions: Frederick Holman (1908), Walter Bathe (1912), Hakan Malmrot (1920), Robert Skelton (1924), Yoshiyuki Tsuruta (1928), Yoshiyuki Tsuruta (1932), Tetsuo Hamuro (1936), Joe Verdeur (1948), John Davies (1952), Masaru Furukawa (1956), William Mulliken (1960), Ian O'Brien (1964), Felipe Muñoz (1968), John Hencken (1972), David Wilkie (1976), Robertas Zulpa (1980), Victor Davis (1984), Jozsef Szabo (1988), Mike Barrowman (1992), Norbert Rozsa (1996), Domenico Fioravanti (2000), Kosuke Kitajima (2004), Kosuke Kitajima (2008)

World Record: Christian Sprenger, Australia, 2:07.31

Notable: Japan's prowess in this event has been extremely impressive. It has won six gold medals, including two each from Yoshiyuki Tsuruta and Kosuke Kitajima. Japan has also won three silver and two bronze medals.

THE HEADLINERS

The big storyline in this event—as is the case with the 100 breast—is whether Japan's **Kosuke Kitajima** can collect a third straight gold medal. Entering London, no man has won the same event at three consecutive Olympiads, but Kitajima will have a pair of opportunities. Like the 100, he'll also be the favorite in the 200, thanks to a 2:08.00 clocking at Japan's Trials.

Hungarian **Daniel Gyurta**, the two-time reigning

world champion, will find himself firmly in the chase for gold. He has long been known for his closing surge, but he has also generated more front-end speed than in past years. Another contender for gold will be Kitajima's countryman, **Ryo Tateishi**, who swam 2:08.17 in April.

For the United States, a couple of surprise names emerged at the Olympic Trials.

Using a superb back half, **Scott Weltz** cruised to the victory in 2:09.01, putting himself in discussion for the championship final. The second position went to **Clark Burckle**, who will need a career best to get involved in the medal picture.

Germany has two strong entries in **Marco Koch** and **Christian Vom Lehn**, who was the bronze medalist at the World Champs. Also keep an eye on Great Britain's **Michael Jamieson**. Australia's **Brenton Rickard** and **Christian Sprenger** are on the radar, too, but must drop some time in order to contend for a medal.

WHAT ELSE?

Coming off a European championship in this event, **Daniel Gyurta** is tracking well heading to London. The key for him, however, will be getting the job done when it matters most. Four years ago, Gyurta had his best time in the preliminary heats, but couldn't match that speed in the semifinals or final.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Kosuke Kitajima, JPN

Silver: Daniel Gyurta, HUN

Bronze: Ryo Tateishi, JPN ♦



PHOTO BY PETER H. BUCK

PICTURED » Michael Phelps, USA

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Michael Phelps, USA

Past Champions: Doug Russell (1968), Mark Spitz (1972), Matt Vogel (1976), Par Arvidsson (1980), Michael Gross (1984), Anthony Nesty (1988), Pablo Morales (1992), Denis Pankratov (1996), Lars Frolander (2000), Michael Phelps (2004), Michael Phelps (2008)

World Record: Michael Phelps, USA, 49.82

Notable: When Pablo Morales won the gold medal in the 100 fly at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, it was one of the best comeback stories of the Games. Morales failed to qualify for the 1988 Olympics as a heavy favorite and temporarily retired from the sport, only to return and deliver the finest performance of his career.

THE HEADLINERS

At the last two Olympics, **Michael Phelps** has used every last inch of the pool to mine a pair of gold medals. In 2004, he ran down **Ian Crocker** at the wall. Four years later, Phelps clipped **Milorad Cavic** by a hundredth of a second in one of the greatest finishes in swimming history. Surely, Phelps would love an easier win this time around.

Phelps is coming off another world title in the 100 fly and will be the favorite against a field that isn't nearly as deep as some of the other events on the schedule.

100 Meter Butterfly

BY JOHN LOHN

If Cavic can regain the form he realized in Beijing and at the 2009 World Championships, where Phelps also prevailed, Cavic could potentially give his rival a scare. Otherwise, Phelps will be a big favorite.

Poland's **Konrad Czerniak** has seen his profile rise over the last year, in part due to his silver medal in this event at the World Championships. The United States' **Tyler McGill** was the bronze medalist at Worlds and continues to improve in each of his international appearances, meaning he could push for a silver medal.

Kenya's **Jason Dunford** has been a steady performer for the last several years, and Germany's **Benjamin Starke** cracked the 52-second barrier at Germany's nationals. Australia's best chance at a medal will be **Chris Wright**, who clocked 51.67 at the Aussie Trials, and Japan will turn to **Takuro Fujii**.

WHAT ELSE?

The 100 fly is one of four events in which **Michael Phelps** could capture a third consecutive gold medal, joining the 200 fly, 200 IM and 400 IM.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Michael Phelps, USA

Silver: Milorad Cavic, SRB

Bronze: Tyler McGill, USA ♦



PICTURED » Michael Phelps, USA

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Michael Phelps, USA

Past Champions: William Yorzyk (1956), Mike Troy (1960), Kevin Berry (1964), Carl Robie (1968), Mark Spitz (1972), Mike Bruner (1976), Sergey Fesenko (1980), Jon Sieben (1984), Michael Gross (1988), Mel Stewart (1992), Denis Pankratov (1996), Tom Malchow (2000), Michael Phelps (2004), Michael Phelps (2008)

World Record: Michael Phelps, USA, 1:51.51

Notable: The triumph of Jon Sieben at the 1984 Olympics was a big upset, as the Australian teenager upended Germany's Michael Gross en route to the gold medal. Gross was the world record holder, but Sieben set a global standard of 1:57.04 to beat "The Albatross," who was timed in 1:57.40.

THE HEADLINERS

He broke onto the world stage in this event in 2000, and he should walk away with a third consecutive Olympic title in London. Yes, **Michael Phelps** is still a heavy favorite in the event that started his legend. He will enter his last Olympics as the reigning world champion and as the owner of the four fastest times in history.

Japan's **Takeshi Matsuda** could be the top challenger. Matsuda, the bronze medalist at the 2008 Olympics, won silver at last summer's World Championships, just 67-hundredths behind Phelps. Hungary's **Laszlo Cseh** should again be a significant factor—at the 2008

200 Meter Butterfly

BY JOHN LOHN

Games, Cseh's silver medal in the 200 fly was one of three medals of that color for the Hungarian.

Australia's **Nick D'Arcy** will get his chance to compete at the Olympics this summer, four years after he was denied the opportunity following an altercation with **Simon Cowley** in a bar in which D'Arcy threw a punch that broke several bones in Cowley's face. This year, D'Arcy has been 1:54-mid, a time that shows he'll be a contender, as will the USA's **Tyler Clary**, who clocked 1:55-low at Trials.

China's **Yin Chin** and **Wu Peng** have the chance to break through for minor medals—with Wu having won bronze at last year's World Champs—as do South Africa's **Chad Le Clos**, Poland's **Pawel Korzeniowski**, Hungarian youngster **Bence Biczo** and Austria's **Dinko Jukic**.

WHAT ELSE?

This event is one of four (along with the 100 fly and both IMs) in which **Michael Phelps** can become a three-time Olympic champion. No man has ever won the same event at three straight Olympiads, and only **Dawn Fraser** (100 free) and **Kristina Egerszegi** (200 back) have three-peated on the women's side.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Michael Phelps, USA

Silver: Takeshi Matsuda, JPN

Bronze: Nick D'Arcy, AUS ♦

PICTURED » Ryan Lochte (left) and Michael Phelps, USA

[PHOTO BY ANDREW WEBER, US PRESSWIRE]

200 Meter Individual Medley

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Michael Phelps, USA

Past Champions: Charles Hickcox (1968), Gunnar Larsson (1972), Alex Baumann (1984), Tamas Darnyi (1988), Tamas Darnyi (1992), Attila Czene (1996), Massimiliano Rosolino (2000), Michael Phelps (2004), Michael Phelps (2008)

World Record: Ryan Lochte, USA, 1:54.00

Notable: When Ryan Lochte clocked 1:54.00 at the World Championships in Shanghai last summer, he became the first individual to take down one of the high-tech suit records. Finishing behind Lochte in that race was Michael Phelps, who checked in with a personal-best 1:54.16.

THE HEADLINERS

The top two positions in this event are pretty much locked up by **Michael Phelps** and **Ryan Lochte**. The question is: "Which man will emerge victorious?" While Phelps is the two-time defending Olympic champion, Lochte owns the world record and has prevailed at the past two World Championships. The duel between these two should be one of the highlights of the Olympic Games.

If there is a reason to give the advantage to Phelps, it has everything to do with Lochte's schedule. About 20 minutes before the final of the 200 IM, Lochte will contest the final of the 200 back. That's a quick turn-

around even for Lochte, who has long showed the ability to handle a difficult double.

Laszlo Cseh, the silver medalist in the 200 IM at the Beijing Games, will certainly be a factor in the medal hunt. Despite a subpar meet last year at the World Championships, the Hungarian finished third. In the battle for bronze in London, Cseh will be fighting it out with a number of athletes, including Brazil's **Thiago Pereira** and Japan's **Kosuke Hagino**, a rising star.

Great Britain's fans will put their support behind the duo of **James Goddard** and **Joseph Roebuck**, who both cracked 1:58.50 at the British Trials. Austria's **Markus Rogan**, a longtime fixture on the international scene, was fifth at Worlds. South Africa's **Chad Le Clos** and **Darian Townsend** warrant watching.

WHAT ELSE?

How much quicker will **Michael Phelps** and **Ryan Lochte** be than the rest of the field? At last summer's World Championships, **Laszlo Cseh** was more than three seconds behind his rivals. Look for the winner to be in the 1:53-mid range, if not faster.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Michael Phelps, USA

Silver: Ryan Lochte, USA

Bronze: Laszlo Cseh, HUN ♦



PICTURED » Ryan Lochte, USA

400 Meter Individual Medley

BY JOHN LOHN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: Michael Phelps, USA

Past Champions: Richard Roth (1964), Charles Hickcox (1968), Gunnar Larsson (1972), Rod Strachan (1976), Aleksandr Sidorenko (1980), Alex Baumann (1984), Tamas Darnyi (1988), Tamas Darnyi (1992), Tom Dolan (1996), Tom Dolan (2000), Michael Phelps (2004), Michael Phelps (2008)

World Record: Michael Phelps, USA, 4:03.84

Notable: Of the 12 times the event has been contested, the United States has captured the gold medal seven times. On nine occasions, an American has collected the silver medal. More impressive, the United States has posted a gold-silver sweep six times!

THE HEADLINERS

There was a time when this event seemed to lack some spice, with **Michael Phelps** vowing never to contest it again. However, he had a change in heart and was second at the U.S. Olympic Trials, finishing behind **Ryan Lochte**.

Now that Phelps has decided to contest this event, he'll have the chance to become the first man to win gold in a single event at three consecutive Olympics. Only Dawn Fraser (100 free) and Kristina Egerszegi (200 back) have accomplished the feat. Phelps also

has the chance to three-peat in the 200 IM, 100 fly and 200 fly—the event that put him on the swimming map.

Phelps will have to be perfect to deal with Lochte, the bronze medalist at the Beijing Games. Lochte was the best in the world in 2010 and 2011, and a head-to-head showdown between these two men in the 400 IM is a terrific way to open the London Games.

Although off his game at Worlds, Hungary's **Laszlo Cseh** will factor into the medal picture. After winning bronze in the 400 IM in 2004, he was the silver medalist in 2008. **Kosuke Hagino** and **Yuya Horihata**, the bronze medalist at Worlds, both went 4:10 at the Japanese Trials and will be expected to advance to the final. **Thomas Fraser-Holmes** is fast-improving in the event and will be Australia's top challenger.

WHAT ELSE?

Momentum for the United States figures to be obtained right off the bat, thanks to **Michael Phelps** and **Ryan Lochte**. A gold-silver finish—regardless of who wins—will give Team USA a nice boost.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Ryan Lochte, USA
Silver: Michael Phelps, USA
Bronze: Laszlo Cseh, HUN ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]



PICTURED » Brendan Hansen, USA



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: United States

Past Champions: United States (1960), United States (1964), United States (1968), United States (1972), United States (1976), Australia (1980), United States (1984), United States (1988), United States (1992), United States (1996), United States (2000), United States (2004), United States (2008)

World Record: United States (Aaron Peirsol, Eric Shanteau, Michael Phelps, Dave Walters), 3:27.28

Notable: The only time the United States failed to win this event at the Olympic Games was in 1980. Of course, that was the Olympics in which President Jimmy Carter announced that the United States would boycott the Games.

THE HEADLINERS

Although the **United States** remains the favorite in this event, this will be far from a runaway. A positive at the American Trials was the solidifying of the front half of the relay, with Matt Grevers and Brendan Hansen looking strong to provide promise in the backstroke and breaststroke legs.

The third and fourth legs are set with Michael Phelps handling the butterfly leg and Nathan Adrian anchoring on freestyle. Adrian could find himself in the position of having to hold off **Australia** and its anchor, James Magnussen. At the World Champs last summer, Magnussen nearly

rallied his team for gold.

The key for the Aussies will be giving Magnussen a chance at the gold medal. Hayden Stoeckel is the likely backstroker, while Brenton Rickard will take care of the breaststroke leg. Chris Wright has emerged as a reliable option on the butterfly leg, but staying with Phelps will be a huge challenge.

Germany was the bronze medalist at the World Champs and is solid with Helge Meeuw or Jan-Philip Glania on backstroke and Paul Biedermann coming down in distance to anchor on the freestyle leg. For **Japan**, which has won bronze at the past two Olympics, it boasts a splendid opening trio of Ryosuke Irie, Kosuke Kitajima and Takuro Fujii. The problem, as has been the case in previous years, is having a freestyler capable of sticking with the rest of the world. A plethora of other nations also have the ability to make some noise, including **Russia** and **Brazil**.

WHAT ELSE?

Brazil is an interesting player in this race. If a grouping of Thiago Pereira, Felipe Silva and Kaio Almeida can keep the race tight, anchor Cesar Cielo could put his country in the mix for the bronze medal.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: United States
Silver: Australia
Bronze: Japan ♦

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]



PICTURED » Nathan Adrian, USA



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: United States

Past Champions: United States (1964), United States (1968), United States (1972), United States (1984), United States (1988), United States (1992), United States (1996), Australia (2000), South Africa (2004), United States (2008)

World Record: United States (Michael Phelps, Garrett Weber-Gale, Cullen Jones, Jason Lezak), 3:08.24

Notable: The United States' Jason Lezak has earned a medal of each color in the 400 freestyle relay, taking silver in 2000, bronze in 2004 and gold in 2008.

THE HEADLINERS

Chances are, this event will not bring the excitement it did at the 2008 Games, when Jason Lezak reeled in Alain Bernard in the final strokes to give the United States the gold medal over France. Nonetheless, the 400 free relay is always a spectacular affair and a great way to kick off relay action.

Australia, coming off its gold medal performance at last summer's World Championships, enters the Olympic Games as the undisputed favorite. James Magnussen and James Roberts are hammers that any country will have difficulty matching. In Magnussen, Australia features the heavy pick for the individual title in the 100 free.

The **United States** and **France** will give chase to the Aussies, with the American quartet buoyed by the likes of Michael Phelps and Nathan Adrian. Phelps relishes his relay opportunities and will undoubtedly be prepared to jumpstart the U.S. As for Adrian, he's the United States' top sprinter and likely will be charged with anchoring the relay.

France was the silver medalist at Worlds and would love nothing more than to atone for coming up short in Beijing. Youngster Yannick Agnel is the go-to guy for the French, who will also rely on the talents of Amaury Leveaux and Fabien Gilot. Also keep an eye on the squads from **Italy**, **Russia** and **South Africa**, which placed fourth-through-sixth at the World Championships. Among them, Russia could be the best bet to jump into the medal scene.

WHAT ELSE?

Australia won the gold medal at the World Championships in 3:11.00, but that time is unlikely to secure the gold medal in London. In the lead-up to the Games, countries have shown considerably more depth, and a clocking under 3:10 would not be shocking.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Australia

Silver: United States

Bronze: Russia ♦

PICTURED » *Conor Dwyer, USA*

[PHOTO BY PETER H. BICK]



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champion: United States

Past Champions: Great Britain (1908), Australasia (1912), United States (1920), United States (1924), United States (1928), Japan (1932), Japan (1936), United States (1948), United States (1952), Australia (1956), United States (1960), United States (1964), United States (1968), United States (1972), United States (1976), Soviet Union (1980), United States (1984), United States (1988), Unified Team (1992), United States (1996), Australia (2000), United States (2004), United States (2008)

World Record: United States (Michael Phelps, Ricky Berens, Dave Walters, Ryan Lochte), 6:58.55

Notable: The only two times Japan has won an Olympic relay title was in this event. The Japanese prevailed in 1932 and 1936, with Masanori Yusa the only athlete to compete on both relays.

THE HEADLINERS

The **United States** is the favorite to win a third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 800 free relay, largely due to the duo of Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte. Phelps, of course, is the reigning Olympic champion and the fastest 200 freestyler ever in a textile suit, while Lochte is the reigning world champion.

Behind Phelps and Lochte, the United States remains solid with Ricky Berens—who will also be competing in the individual 200 event—and Conor Dwyer.

Keeping an eye on **China** and **Russia** will be a must. While Sun Yang is China's go-to guy, it's uncertain which foursome will step to the blocks. However, a loaded and peaking Chinese team will be difficult to handle—after all, China won the bronze medal at last summer's World Championships. For Russia, it has plenty of power in Danila Izotov, Nikita Lobintsev and Evgeny Lagunov.

Coming off a silver medal at Worlds, **France** will again be a factor in the medal hunt. With Yannick Agnel and Amaury Leveaux, the French look good. They also possess depth, thanks to the presence of Gregory Mallet and Clement Leffert. Other pushes for the final will come from **Germany**, fueled by Paul Biedermann, and **Australia**, which will need improvement across the board since it lacks a star 200 freestyler.

WHAT ELSE?

The leadoff legs of this relay could make the event partly resemble the 200 free. The likes of Michael Phelps, Yannick Agnel and Paul Biedermann were leadoff swimmers at the World Champs, adding intrigue to the race from the start.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: United States

Silver: France

Bronze: Russia ♦



[PHOTO BY ALESSANDRO BIANCHI, REUTERS]

PICTURED » Keri-Anne Payne, Great Britain



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Reigning Champions: *Women:* Larisa Ilchenko, Russia (1:59:27.7); *Men:* Maarten van der Weijden, Netherlands (1:51:51.6)

World 10K Champions: *Women:* Keri-Anne Payne, Great Britain; *Men:* Spyridon Gianniotis, Greece

Notable: With an expected 30,000 spectators ringing the Serpentine in Hyde Park, the ambiance around the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim will be electrifying for the nearly two-hour battle among the 25 finalists on Aug. 9 (women) and 10 (men).

FEMALE MEDAL CONTENDERS

Keri-Anne Payne, Great Britain: The silver medalist from Beijing, who was outkicked by Russia's Larisa Ilchenko in the last 50 meters, has prepared four years for redemption in London. She evaluated what was necessary to capture gold and upped the ante for her rivals, which does not include the now-retired Ilchenko.

Payne has become faster and more fit while she elevated her navigational IQ to sky-high levels. But most importantly, she remains composed throughout races when her lead is challenged. If her competitors throw in surges or initiate aggressive physical contact, she has countered with surges of her own.

Over the last quadrennial, Payne has almost always been in the lead at a world championship race. She is expected to utilize her same win-from-the-front strategy, pushing the pace right from the start. If she has her usual body-length lead with one loop to go, it would be hard to imagine anyone knocking off the gold medal favorite.

Melissa Gorman, Australia: If Gorman can hang tough throughout the fast-paced race and cling to Payne's hip going into the last loop, she has the potential to pull an upset and capture Australia's first mara-

thon swimming medal. Gorman can hold her ground in a tight pack and wisely position herself to make moves at all the right times. Known for her finish kick and savvy tactics honed in races around the world over the last four years, she has what it takes to hear her national anthem at the awards ceremony.

Haley Anderson, USA: Similar to Gorman, the NCAA 500 yard freestyle champion can use her closing speed to stand atop the medal podium, but she has to be within striking distance of Payne throughout the 10K. With a pace that will probably be dictated by others, she can duck behind her most experienced competitors to conserve energy, giving her a chance to use her speed on the last loop.

Martina Grimaldi, Italy: The 2010 world champion has all the tools and talent to pull off an upset. She can go shoulder-to-shoulder with Payne for 10,000 meters and can be aggressive when necessary in a chase pack. To earn the gold, several things will have to break Grimaldi's way, while Payne would have to make an unlikely mistake toward the end. But a medal of any color is most definitely in the cards for one of the most experienced open water swimmers in the field.

Other Challengers: There will be only seconds separating the medalists from the next eight to 10 swimmers. **Marianna Lymperta** of Greece is the most likely dark horse in the field, with the speed, strategy and stamina to claim a medal. **Swann Oberson** (Switzerland), **Poliana Okimoto** (Brazil) and **Jana Pechanova** (Czech Republic) will also be in the top pack.

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Keri-Anne Payne, GBR

Silver: Melissa Gorman, AUS

Bronze: Martina Grimaldi, ITA

— continued on 53

[PHOTO BY ALY SONG, REUTERS]

PICTURED > Thomas Lurz, Germany (left) and Spyros Gianniotis, Greece



OPEN WATER — continued from 52

MALE MEDAL CONTENDERS

Spyros Gianniotis, Greece: Gianniotis has transformed himself from a 16th-place finisher in the 2008 marathon swim to the co-favorite. The last several international competitions have been close battles between Gianniotis and Thomas Lurz. The two senior statesmen of the professional 10K circuit have pushed the speed of the last half beyond anything others could maintain. He and Lurz have been training at such fast, sustained pace that their dominance in races is not surprising. In London, he has as good a chance as any to be No. 1.

Thomas Lurz, Germany: Open water swimming's version of the rivalry between Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte features Lurz and Gianniotis. The competitors have gone back and forth over the last several races from Shanghai to Cancún, each alternately standing victorious while the other accepts the silver. Lurz can and will push the pace and is justifiably confident that his considerable pain threshold and ability to shift gears at the end is enough to capture gold.

Ous Mellouli, Tunisia: Mellouli brings the biggest unknown to the 10K. Similar to David Davies at the 2008 Olympics when the British 1500-meter swimmer swam to a silver medal with an unorthodox strategy, Mellouli is the strongest and fastest swimmer in the field. On paper, the 10K is his race to lose, but the gold medalist is also the least experienced swimmer in the field.

Because his competition knows that Mellouli can outspurt them with his proven speed, they will have to nullify some of that advantage by pushing the pace early and faster than normal—while initiating contact a bit or blocking him in tactical attempts to throw him off his game. But by pushing the pace, Mellouli will have fewer competitors to worry about, and he can swim at any pace that the leaders dictate.

Other Challengers: Like the women's field, there will undoubtedly be at least 10 men finishing seconds

behind the medalists. The Russians, **Sergey Bolshakov** and **Vladimir Dyatchin**, will be in the hunt as will the quickly emerging **Richard Weinberger** of Canada and **Valerio Cleri** of Italy. Both Weinberger and Cleri are courageous and can draft well enough to close with a sprint that could earn them a medal. While American hopes will be pinned on **Alex Meyer**, his recent collarbone break may have set him back too far.

THE INTANGIBLES

The pressure will be on the athletes in unprecedented ways during the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim. Several hours before the 10K, throngs of spectators will be lining the banks of the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

With free unhindered viewing, crowds of four-to-six-people deep are expected to ring nearly the entire compact course. The athletes will be able to hear—and feel—the electrifying ambiance, where most of the fans will cheer for gold medal performances from Payne and her British teammate, Daniell Fogg. Hearts will be pounding and adrenaline will be building hours before they start, sapping the energy of those who find the unprecedented atmosphere overwhelming.

Under such conditions, the athletes will most likely swim faster in the beginning than they plan. A function of their adrenaline, this faster pace plays into the hands of Payne, Gorman and Lymperta on the women's side. For the men, a faster pace is clearly advantageous to Lurz, Gianniotis and Mellouli. ♦

SWIMMING WORLD'S PICKS

Gold: Thomas Lurz, GER

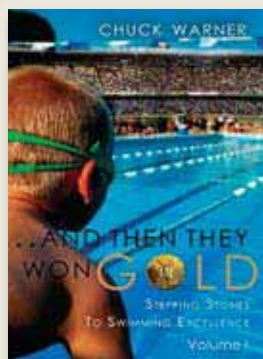
Silver: Spyros Gianniotis, GRE

Bronze: Ous Mellouli, TUN

Steven Munatones writes for the Daily News of Open Water Swimming and created www.openwaterswimming.com and www.openwaterpedia.com.

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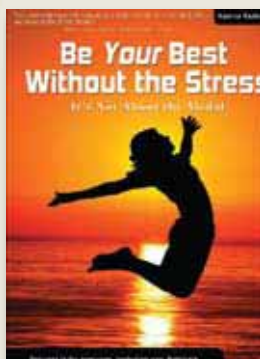


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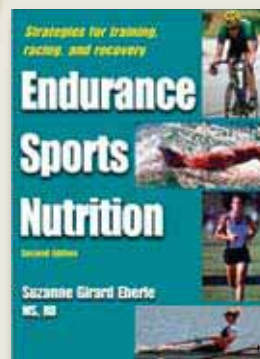


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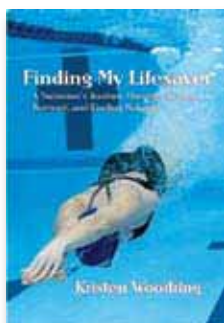


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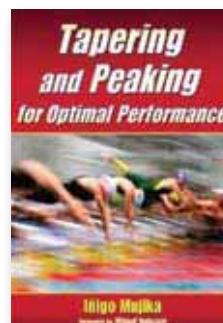


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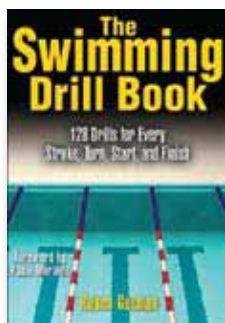


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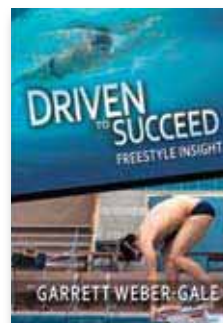


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PICTURED » Beginning on Saturday, July 28, the Aquatic Centre will feature the swimming and diving events during the 2012 London Olympics.

