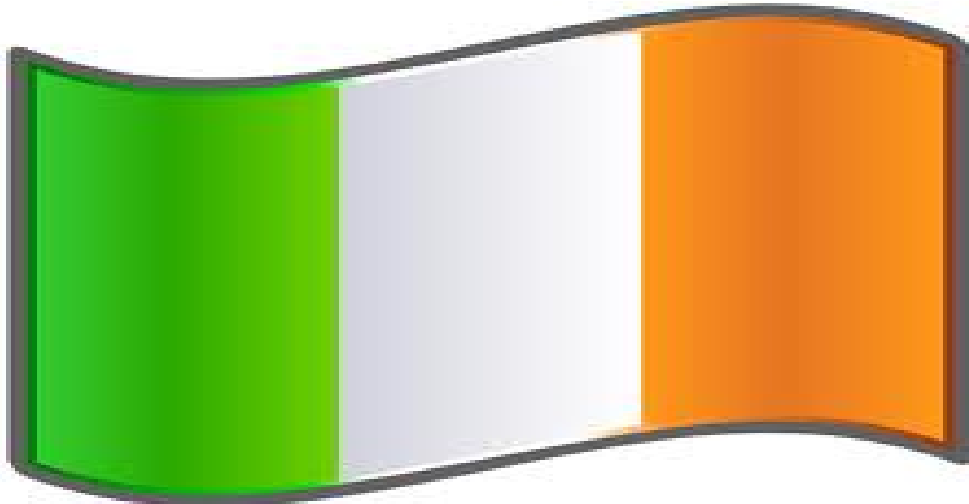


Irish Olympic Swimming Squad.



Swimming is a hugely physical and demanding sport, with athletes competing over distances from 50m to 400m, with races lasting from 20 seconds to over four minutes in length. Swimmers need huge strength and stamina to power themselves through the water, as well as perfectly honed technique. Events for the Olympic swimming programme are held in a 50-metre-long pool and include 26 individual and six team relay men's and women's events. These include freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and



the individual medley style. The team events are the freestyle and the medley relay. For contact details of Swim Ireland please click on Full story .



Olympic History

Due to the rise in popularity of the sport, swimming events were held in the inaugural modern Summer Games in Athens in 1896. They were very different from the events held today, though. They were held in the open Mediterranean sea in the Bay of Zea, which was unusually icy cold for the time of year.

Events were held for men only, and included the 100m, 400m and 1500m freestyle and breaststroke, with the 100m and 1500m being won by Hungarian Alfred Hajos, who had been inspired to take up swimming following the death of his father in a drowning accident. 40,000 people turned up to watch, though, confirming the popularity of the sport.

In the 1900 Summer Games in Paris, France, events took place in the River Seine, with a 200m backstroke competition added to the swimming schedule, as well as one-off contests for underwater swimming and an obstacle race.

The 50m freestyle and 100m backstroke were added to the programme in the 1904 Summer Games in St Louis, USA, while women were allowed to compete in their own swimming events in the 1912 Summer Games in Stockholm, Sweden.

Events moved from natural open water to a more manageable 100m-long pool for the 1908 Summer Games in London, England, with the adoption of the now-standard 50m pool coming in the 1924 Summer Games in Paris, France.

The butterfly stroke was created in 1940, when breaststroke swimmers they could go even faster if they moved their arms over their head, and butterfly events joined the Olympic swimming programme for the Summer Games in Melbourne, Australia, in 1956. Sweden.

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Today, men and women compete in virtually the same list of wide-ranging disciplines in a 50m controlled, heated pool – the only difference being that the long-distance race for men covers 1500m, while for women it covers 800m.



SPORTSFILE 19 November 2010: Gary Preaney, Sunday's Wall 'N' of Luck, on his way to winning the Men's 200m Breaststroke Final in a time of 2:22.81, 5th National Short Course Swimming Championships, Limerick, Ireland. G.A. Callinan. Photos credit: Brian Lawless - SPORTSFILE

Relay squad closing gap

28th July 2011

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Ireland's 4x200m freestyle women's relay team of Sycerika McMahon, Melanie Nocher, Clare Dawson and Gráinne Murphy set a new Irish senior record early this morning in Shanghai at the World Swimming Championships, recording a time of 8:07.66 - an improvement of just under two seconds from the previous record mark set in 2007.

The Irish team went in heat two of three heats, alongside the no. 2 seeded Chinese team, and finished sixteenth place overall out of seventeen teams. This was the first time for the quartet to swim on a relay squad together.

“The 4x200m is getting stronger every time we see it so we just had to go out and swim our own race and I think that's what we did – everybody gave it their all so we can definitely take a positive away from it – a new Irish senior record. We don't get to swim relays very often – these guys that are doing these races, they're practicing take overs every couple of months

with each other, so for us it's hard, we're just getting used to swimming together and I think for that it was a good swim and you can only take positives away from it," commented Melanie Nocher who swam the second leg on the relay.

Bank's swim plan

28th September 2011

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Irish swimming's high performance director Peter Banks, will send 14 swimmers to two long course (50 metre) meets in December.

No Irish swimmer made the standard at the recent World Swimming Championships in Shanghai, and Banks wants to give swimmers further opportunities to get under the Olympic-qualifying standard before Christmas.

To date only Dubliner Barry Murphy has achieved the Olympic standard , back in March in the 100m breaststroke (1:00.77)

As a result, instead of concentrating on the upcoming short course (25 metres) season, Banks will instead send a ten-strong squad to the Dutch Open in Eindhoven from 2-4 December.

The squad which will include European 1500 metres silver medallist Grainne Murphy, together with Nuala Murphy, Shani Stallard, Syckerika McMahon, Niamh O'Sullivan, Beth Carson, Karl Burdis, Claire Dawson, plus Beijing Olympians Melanie Nocher and Ashling Cooney.

Banks will also send four of his American-based swimmers in Barry Murphy, Andrew Bree, Fiona Doyle and Ryan Harrison to the US Winter Nationals at the Georgia Tech Aquatic Centre in Atlanta. The Winter Nationals take place over the weekend of 1-3 December.

Those who haven't made Olympic qualification will have three further meets in which to make the required times: the Irish Olympic trials at the NAC in Dublin, which starts on 29 February next year and which backs onto British trials a week later, before the final qualifier, the European Long Course at Antwerp in Belgium at the end of May 2012.

Ireland also hope to have open water swimmer Chris Bryan in London. Bryan finished a creditable ninth at the recent 10km marathon test event, which was held at the London Olympic open water venue.