



**Fina**  
WORLD  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

**WATER. WONDER.  
WELCOME.**



## **Where it all started...memories from Belgrade**

**2016.11.15. 15:22 CET**

*In 1973 FINA organised the very first edition of its World Aquatics Championships, held in Belgrade between August 31 and September 9. The Tasmajdan Sport and Recreation Centre was the venue for all disciplines' events - the multisport complex built in 1958 contained a basketball arena and football court as well.*

47 nations and 686 athletes participated at the first FINA World Championships. If you take a look at the medal table, you can see that two nations dominated the whole field: finally, the USA took the first place in front of East Germany. The American athletes won 38 medals altogether (15 gold, 16 silver, 7 bronze) in the meanwhile the GDR gathered 13 gold, 6 silver and 9 bronze medals. However, the "other side", West Germany won only 3 of all. As Italy became the third country on the list with 5 medals, it is clear to see how powerful the first two leading countries were. The host nation, Yugoslavia finished the competition with one bronze medal in water polo.

As far as Hungary is concerned, the first gold medal in swimming was won by the current head coach of the Hungarian swimming team, Andras Hargitay in the 400 metres individual medley.

Two swimmers of the GDR, Kornelia Ender (4 gold) and Renate Vogel (3) expropriated the races. The competition programme consisted of 14 swimming races for women, and 10 of these were won by the socialist Germany including the two relay races.

In diving, there were two different heights. At the 10 metres platform, Italian Klaus Dibiasi got the highest points and he also won a silver in the 3 metres springboard behind the American Phil Boggs. The Swedish Ulrika Knape copied the South European colleague's performance and won the 10 metres platform and became the second at the 3 metres springboard event. She could not beat Christa Köhler, not surprisingly from East Germany.

Nobody was able to beat the American synchro girls. Teresa Andersson won the solo

routine, while the US duet and the team triumphed as well. For curiosity, the second place was taken in all the three events by the Canadian team and the third by the Japanese.



The special stamp for the occasion.

The first title of the water polo World Championships was taken by the Hungarian national men's team. There was no knockout stage of the tournament at the time. Instead, there was a preliminary round and a second group stage with the first two teams from the three groups qualifying. Behind the Hungarian team the Soviets and the Yugoslavs finished second and third respectively.

The 1st FINA World Aquatics Championships in 1973 were a lot more than a tournament dominated by two countries topping the medal tables. Originally, the first Championships were to be held in 1971, but were postponed to two years later for financial reasons. At that time, nobody would have thought that one of the world's most successful, prestigious, defining and anticipated sporting events started in Belgrade in 1973.