

BELGRADE 1973

The first Swimming Championships was held in Belgrade in 1973, in the ex Yugoslavia. Belgrade with its infrastructures impressed immediately FINA, the International Swimming Federation: the capital had already at that time three covered Olympic Swimming pools. The first edition took place from the 31st August to the 9th of September, approximately one year after the Olympic Games of Munich. Those Games influenced in many ways the history of Swimming. The Belgrade Championships were supposed to be the highest moment for Mark Spitz after the seven gold medals as many world records gained the year before. But differently, after the slaughter made by the group of the Black September at the Munich Olympic Games, Mark Spitz said it was enough. One of the biggest swimmer in history decided to interrupt his carrier at the age of only 22. This of course contributed to increase his fame joining in the 1977, at only 27 years old, the Hall of Fame. Twenty years after he tried to race again in the Barcelona Championships in 1992.

The 1st FINA World Championships, where 47 Nations took part, started without the most shining star of those times, while another star was about to born: Jim Montgomery, the 18 years old from the Wisconsin, took the chance stealing in this way the scenes and the attention winning five gold medals: 100 and 200 freestyle, 4x100 and 4x 200mt freestyle and 4x100 medley. The American athlete that would win also three gold medals at the Olympic Games of Montreal, became in this way the first to do less than 50 sec's on the 100mt freestyle. But a woman was not far behind and in the last day of competition Novella Calligaris (in the picture below), 19 years old swimmer won two bronze medals in the 400 m medley and 400mt freestyle. But she did more, at the 800 m freestyle final, Novella gave all a great show when at the last 300 m she speeds up and arrives first gaining the World title and the World record. Italy begins in this way, thanks to the performances of Novella Calligaris in Swimming and to those of Klaus di Biasi in diving (in the picture above) with a gold medal diving from the platform and a silver one diving from the trampoline, in a great and unforgettable way.