



RUSSIAN SHORT COURSE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS KICK OFF IN KAZAN

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The five-day tournament will see the country's top swimmers compete for podium spots in Russia's sports capital.

It's for the third consecutive year that Kazan hosts the national swimming championships in its Aquatics Palace that just several months ago hosted the 16th FINA World Championships. Up to 500 swimmers representing 57 regions of Russia will take part in the tournament and make every effort to give their best performance to win medals. During five competition days (November 8-12), 46 medal events will be contested and the best athletes with the highest scoring swim based on the FINA point tables will be determined.

Four-time Olympic champion and President of the Russian Swimming Federation (RSF), Vladimir Salnikov, who was present at the kickoff press conference in Kazan thanked once again the host city for its hospitality during the past FINA World Championships. "I'm very happy that we have yet another chance to say thank you!" he said. For his part, Secretary General of the Executive Directorate for Sports Projects, Ranko Tepavcevic, thanked Vladimir Salnikov for successful teamwork and mentioned that swimming is one of Tatarstan's favourite sports. Besides he reminded that next year Kazan will also host the FINA Diving World Series, which will contribute to further cooperation with the International Swimming Federation (FINA).

"The Kazan Championships are a home event for us," Vladimir Salnikov said at the press conference. "I hope that the athletes' medal hopes and plans will come true. The Olympic preparation has already started, and we've reinforced the coaching staff."

During the competitions, workshops related to organisational matters will be arranged for coaches, technical officials and team representatives.

Sergey Kolmogorov, interim head coach of the Russian national swimming team, talked about the preparation for the national tournament and European championships.

"We've concluded the first cycle of Olympic preparations. Our first competition is the Russian championships, and the second ones are the European Short Course Swimming Championships in Israel and the Vladimir Salnikov Cup in St. Petersburg. As far as the selection process is concerned, by agreement with most coaches and swimmers it was decided not to boost the preparation in the given training cycle. It's important for us to carefully analyse various aspects of athletes' readiness: physical fitness, emotional state, stationary swimming efficiency and other aspects."

In other words, part of athletes are about to have only two out of three training cycles; they are gearing up for the Games individually that's why not all of them arrived in Kazan for the competition. However, according to the interim head coach of the Russian national team, good results were already shown during the preliminary heats on the first competition day.

The national championships will have some special features: preliminary semis and finals will be contested in the 50 and 100m events while preliminary heats and finals will be contested in the 100m event. Swimmers for the national team will be selected based on the final heats.

As for the European championships in Israel, they will feature quite a lot of events, including a relay. No more than two swimmers can be selected for each event. According to Kolmogorov's expectations, around 30-35 athletes and a corresponding number of coaches will go to Israel for the tournament.

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