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Original article

ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVELS OF SWIMMING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRONGEST SWIMMER TEAMS AT THE I-XXXIV WATERSPORTS CHAMPIONSHIPS FROM 1926-2018

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Abstract

Relevance of the study. As a rule, the International Federation of European Swimming's schedule – LEN, includes the European Watersports Championships. It has already been presented at the First European Swimming Championships since 1926. To date, 34 European Championships have been held, so it is very important to evaluate the achievements of the teams participating in the European continent to determine the real swimming development rate.

Material. Average readings in the achievements of swimmers-winners have been summarized at 34 European water sports championships, respectively, at stages 1-2-3 among 127-525-906 men and 90-495-881 women at all distances in sports and marathon swimming programs over a long period of time from 1926 till 2018.

The goal of research was to evaluate the team performance rating of among the participants of different gender from the European countries at different distances of sporting and marathoner swimming according to the prize medals they received during European Swimming Championship at stages I-II-III when they were conducted from 1926 till 2018.

Results. The paper revealed an objective rating for the performance of the strongest swimmers teams based on the results of receiving both the number and quality of prize medals among men and women, at the I-XXXIV European Swimming Championships from 1926 to 2018 on stages I-II-III of their origin, development and further performance. At the first stage of the European Swimming (Aquatics) Championships, held from 1926 to 1950, the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of the objective rating revealed, included: Germany-45 medals, the Netherlands-40, Hungary-26, the United Kingdom-24, Sweden-20, France-18, Denmark-17, Italy-9, Belgium-5, Yugoslavia - 5 medals. In the second stage of the European Aquatics Championships, which took place from 1954 to 1991, the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of the objective rating, included: GDR-287 medals, USSR-167, FRG-Germany-123+1* (marathon), the Netherlands-77+1*, Hungary-68+2*, the United Kingdom-66, Italy-45+4*, Sweden-45, France-30, Romania-17 medals. In the third stage of the European Aquatics Championships, held from 1993 to 2018, the top ten most successful countries for the results of the identified objective rating, included the following countries of the continent: Germany-177+42* (marathon) medals, Italy-158+37*, Russia-160+29*, France-132+16*, Hungary-138+9*, the United Kingdom-145+2*, Sweden-106, the Netherlands-84+21*, Ukraine-82+1*, Spain-61+7* medals.

Key words: European Swimming Championships, prize medals, men swimmers, women swimmers, achievement score, team rankings.

The urgency of the problem. At the current stage of the development of sports swimming, the increasingly informative importance in the professional interests of professionals acquires reliable information on the possibilities of swimmers' physical abilities performance in achieving the best results among all genders to improve their swimming motor skills throughout their sporting careers paths (Ganchar, 2015-a, 2015-b, 2015-c and Ganchar, 2018-a and 2018-b).

At the same time, reliable information on the dynamics of differences in results in sports swimming among boys and girls, males and females competing in prestigious competitions in the current publications on the theory and method of physical education is almost

unavailable (Ganchar, 2007; Dutchak, 2009; Kuramshin, 2002; Platonov, 2000, 2004). The greatest interest for professionals and swimming enthusiasts are the results of performances of young people and adults at prestigious competitions, such as the European Swimming (Aquatic Sports) Championships, which have been held since 1926, which have already been held for even years only since 2000. (wikipedia.org; swim rankings.net; omegatiming.com; swimnews.com).

In the practice of evaluating the results of their performance, the qualitative indicators in obtaining prize-winning awards, especially gold, then silver and then bronze medals are usually used. However, quantitative indicators (the number of different medals,

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the number of points on the FINA table) are practically not used. This makes it difficult to objectively analyze the success of the performance of the strongest, elite teams-swimmers for a full generalized analysis of swimming skills development and the dynamic development of European swimming in each individual country and on the European continent, in particular.

According to our data (Ganchar, 2015-a), the criterion of difference (in points) on the quality of the medals received during European Swimming Championships at the first stage they were held from 1926-1950, is for males: 418, 395, 380 points respectively, which is determined by the average – 398 points, but the females had 410, 394 and 376 points which averaged 394 points. The overall difference between the average achievement of males and females is similar (398 and 394 points). Also, following our performance (Ganchar, 2015-b), the criterion of difference (in points) in the quality of the medals they received in the second stage of the European championships held from 1954-1991. For females it constitutes 754, 739, 726 points, respectively, which averages 745 points, and the females had 775, 749 and 727 points, respectively which averaged 750 points.

The overall difference between the average achievement of males and females has a similar level (745 and 750 points). In addition, as suggested by our information (Ganchar, 2015-in), the criterion of difference (in points) in the quality of the medals they received in the third stage of their performance held from 1994-2014 is: for males, it constitutes 890, 870, 857 points, respectively (the difference in quality of gold/bronze is 33 points), which is on average - 868 points, and for females, these parameters were: 888, 866, 851 points (888-851-37 points), which is on average - 870 points. The overall difference in the average value of males and females achievements has a similar level (868 and 870 points). This shows that the number of medals is paramount in determining the overall ranking of the achievements of the prize-winning swimmers, and their quality will become secondary.

Therefore, these facts can serve as an informative criterion to assess the levels of achievement (the prize medals in points) for the objective ranking of the winners and medalists in swimming at the previous European Swimming Championships for a long time monitoring. The noted phenomenon should be taken into account when compiling an informative summary table to determine the real rating of participating teams, bearing in mind, first of all, the number of medals, as well as the quality of the difference in the prize medals they received in the dynamics of the European swimming development.

The object of the study: the rating of the team performance of elite swimmers in the European Watersports Championships at sports and marathon swimming distances. The subject of the study: monitoring the dynamics of the team performance of the strongest swimmers-winners at the European

Sports and Marathon Swimming Championships at stages I-II-III held from 1926 till 2018.

The aim of the study is to determine the rating of team performance of different countries among participants of different genders at different distances of sports and marathon swimming on the results of the prize medals they received in the European Water Sports Championships on stages I-II-III conducted from 1926 till 2018. The main tasks were: (a) to determine the rating of the dynamics of male and female swimmers performance at the European Swimming Championships from 1926 to 2018; b) to put the results of the study into the practice of physical education and sports to identify an objective rating of the success of team swimmers performance of different genders.

Research methods

Theoretical analysis of literature (14 modern publications of Ukrainian authors and leading foreign sports swimming specialists were analyzed), generalization of documentary materials (generalization and subsequent analysis b were subjected to the official Protocols of all the past European Water Sport Championships which are posted on the sites, among which there is: wikipedia.org; swim rankings. net; omegatiming.com; swimnews.com); a monitoring of the pedagogical experiment (with the help of it data were obtained that allowed to compare the generalized average data in the achievements of swimmers-winners, respectively, at stages 1-2-3 among 127-525-906 men and 90-495-881 women in the all distances in sports and marathon swimming programs for a long period of time from 1926-2018); mathematical statistics (its use has become necessary to determine the averages in the achievements of swimmers-winners at different distances to assess the performance of swimming by the number of medals they received over a long period of time at stages 1-2-3 of the European Aquatics Championships from 1926-2018).

The results of the study and their Discussion

According to literature and practice, a swimming is one of the most popular and mass sports among young people and adults. Therefore, as a rule, the International Federation of European Swimming includes swimming into the program of its European Swimming Championships. It has been widely represented at the First European Aquatics Championships since 1926, and so far, there have been 34 official European championships.

The European Watersports Championships are the largest International competition in aquatic sports, along with the Olympic Games. It includes swimming in the pool (on open water since 1991), diving, water polo and synchronized swimming. Since 1978-1998, the European Championships have been held every four years, even in the even years between the Summer Olympic Games. Since 2000, the European Watersports Championships, as already noted, have been held every two years for even years.

The program of these competitions was significantly complemented and expanded, ranging from 15-17 types

of swimming in 1926-1950, 34 - in 1954-1991, as well as 36-50 types of program in 1993-2018 which allows many of the strongest swimmers to participate in the expanded number of starts held under the flag of LEN on the International stage. In addition, since 1993, the number of new countries participating in the subsequent European Watersports Championships has significantly expanded. This refers to countries such as Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Serbia, Moldova and a number of other Independent States.

In this regard, it is advisable to highlight and consider in detail the initial development and formation of the program of the European Watersports Championships from 1926 to 1950. Stage I (from 15-17 types of program), from 1954 to 1991. Stage II, and from 1993 to the present, is Stage III which characterizes the gradual expansion of the program to 23-25, including open water marathon swimming, as well as the participation of new independent countries.

The previous and current practice of accounting for the winners and prize-winners in swimming during past

European Watersports Championships in compiling consolidated tables is built on the basis of the quality of the awards they received only where the winners are to be evaluated first, then the silver medalists and only then the bronze medalists, Therefore, currently, it objectively needs to adjust the assessment of the swimming development. The most striking examples of this need can be the consolidated tables summing up the results of all the past European Watersports Championships from 1926 to 2018 according to a total number and quality of medals (Table 1, 2, 3).

Thus, at the first stage of the initial origin (launching) of the European Watersports Championships which took place from 1926 to 1950 among the top ten most successful countries in terms of the identified objective rating levels characterizing a certain level of watersports development there are the following European countries : Germany-45 medals, the Netherlands-40, Hungary-26, the United Kingdom-24, Sweden-20, France-18, Denmark-17, Italy-9, Belgium-5, Yugoslavia - 5 medals (Table 1).

Table 1. Ranking of the teams participating in the European Watersports Championships from 1926-1950 (gold, silver, bronze medals)

Team rankings	Medals of participating countries	Golden		Silver		Bronze		Just		Total
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men + Women
1.	Germany	12	2	13	5	10	3	35	10	45
2.	The Netherlands	1	15	1	14	2	7	4	36	40
3.	Hungary	8	-	9	1	7	1	24	2	26
4.	The United Kingdom	2	2	2	8	3	7	7	17	24
5.	Sweden	11	-	4	-	4	1	19	1	20
6.	Sweden	7	1	7	-	1	2	15	3	18
7.	Denmark	-	9	-	2	1	5	1	16	17
8.	Italy	-	-	4	-	5	-	9	-	9
9.	Belgium	-	1	1	-	1	2	2	3	5
10.	Yugoslavia	-	-	1	-	4	-	5	-	5
11.	Czechoslovakia	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	4
12.	Austria	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2
13.	Finland	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
14.	Switzerland	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Total medals received		42	30	42	30	43	30	127	90	217
European Watersports Championships held in the first stage from 1926 to 1950										
I	1926, Budapest	6	-	6	-	6	-	18	-	18
II	1927, Bologna	6	5	6	5	6	5	18	15	33
III	1931, Paris	6	5	6	5	6	5	18	15	33
IV	1934, Magdeburg	6	5	6	5	6	5	18	15	33
V	1938, London	6	5	6	5	7	5	19	15	34
VI	1947, Monte Carlo	6	5	6	5	6	5	18	15	33
VII	1950, Vienna	6	5	6	5	6	5	18	15	33
Total medals won		42	30	42	30	43	30	127	90	217

In the second stage of stabilization of the European Watersports Championships held from 1954 to 1991 the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of the objective rating identified, included the following teams of swimmers-winners: GDR-287 medals, the

USSR-167, FRG-Germany-123+1*(marathon), the Netherlands-77+1*, Hungary-68+2*, the United Kingdom -66, Italy-45+4*, Sweden-45, France-30, Romania-17 medals (Table 2).

Table 2. Ranking of teams of swimmers from European countries participating in the European Watersports Championships from 1954-1991 including marathon swimming (on gold, silver, bronze medals)

Team rankings	Medals of participating countries	Golden		Silver		Bronze		Just		Total
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1.	GDR	23	109	30	70	33	22	86	201	287
2.	USSR	51	10	44	11	30	21	125	42	167
3.	FRG-Germany	33+1*	4	25	12	26	23	84+1*	39	123+1*
4.	The Netherlands	1	15	1	28	6+1*	26	8+1*	69	77+1*
5.	Hungary	21	8+1*	11	11	12	5+1*	44	24+2*	68+2*
6.	The United Kingdom	13	2	12	9	11	19	36	30	66
7.	Italy	8+1*	-	9+2*	4	16	8+1*	33+3*	12+1*	45+4*
8.	Sweden	7	1	11	2	16	8	34	11	45
9.	France	7	6	9	2	4	2	20	10	30
10.	Romania	-	2	-	5	-	10	-	17	17
11.	Poland	3	-	6	-	2	4	11	4	15
12.	Denmark	1	3	2	2	1	4	4	9	13
13.	Spain	3	-	6	-	4	-	13	-	13
14.	Yugoslavia	1	-	3	3	4	1	8	4	12
15.	Bulgaria	-	1	-	2	-	7	-	10	10
16.	Czechoslovakia	1	-	3	+1*	4	1	8	1+1*	9+1*
17.	Switzerland	-	+1*	-	+1*	3+1*	-	3+1*	+2*	3+3*
18.	Norway	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	3	3
19.	Belgium	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
20.	Ireland	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
21.	Portugal	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
22.	Finland	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Sports swimming		173	163	174	163	172	163	519	489	1008
Marathon swimming		2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	6*	6*	12*
Total medals received		175	165	176	165	174	165	525	495	1020
European Aquatics Championships, held in the second stage of their holding from 1954 to 1991										
VIII	1954, Turin	7	6	7	6	7	6	21	18	39
IX	1958, Budapest	8	7	8	7	8	7	24	21	45
X	1962, Leipzig	10	8	10	8	10	8	30	24	54
XI	1966, Utrecht	10	8	10	8	10	8	30	24	54
XII	1970, Barcelona	15	14	15	14	15	14	45	42	87
XIII	1974, Vienna	15	14	15	14	15	14	45	42	87
XIV	1977, Jonkoping	15	14	15	14	15	14	45	42	87
XV	1981, Split	15	14	15	14	15	14	45	42	87
XVI	1983, Rome	15	15	15	15	15	15	45	45	90
XVII	1985, Sofia	15	15	15	15	15	15	45	45	90
XVIII	1987, Strasbourg	16	16	16	16	16	16	48	48	96
XIX	1989, Bonn	16	16	16	16	16	16	48	48	96
XX	1991, Athens	16+2*	16+2*	17+2*	16+2*	15+2*	16+2*	48+6*	48+6*	96+12*
Sports swimming		173	163	174	163	172	163	519	489	1008
Marathon swimming		2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	6*	6*	12*
Total medals received		175	165	176	165	174	165	525	495	1020

Note: "*" badge - marked medals received by teams in marathon swimming

In the third stage of the modern European Watersports Championships from 1993 to 2018, the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of swimming skills development according to the results of the identified objective rating of achievements the medal-

winning swimmers, the following countries of the continent are: Germany-177+42*(marathon), Italy-158+37*, Russia-160+29*, France-132+16*, Hungary-138+9*, The United Kingdom-145+2*, Sweden-106,

The Netherlands-84+21*, Ukraine-82+1*, Spain-61+7*
(Table 3).

Table 3. Ranking of teams of swimmers of European countries participating in the European Championships in water sports from 1993-2018, including open water swimming

Team rankings	Medals of participating countries	Golden		Silver		Bronze		Just		Total
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1.	Germany	26+4*	49+11*	28+7*	28+7*	19+5*	27+8*	73+16*	104+26*	177+42*
2.	Russia	52+9*	18+3*	32+8*	21+3*	24+4*	13+2*	108+21*	52+8*	160+29*
3.	Italy	33+7*	12+3*	36+6*	15+5*	36+11*	11+5*	105+24*	38+13*	143+37*
4.	France	25+3*	20+1*	27+5*	10+1*	32+5*	18+1*	84+13*	48+3*	132+16*
5.	Hungary	25+2*	32+2*	23	23+3*	18+1*	17+1*	66+3*	72+6*	138+9*
6.	The United Kingdom	19+1*	20	22+1*	24	26	34	67+2*	78	145+2*
7.	Sweden	4	32	13	27	12	18	29	77	106
8.	The Netherlands	16+4*	9+6*	8+2*	24+6*	9	18+3*	33+6*	51+15*	84+21*
9.	Ukraine	18	12+1*	17	12	16	7	51	31+1*	82+1*
10.	Spain	6	13	2+2*	17+1*	5+2*	18+2*	13+4*	48+3*	61+7*
11.	Romania	-	6	8	11	12	12	20	29	49
12.	Denmark	1	13	1	13	1	15	3	41	44
13.	Poland	11	5	5	5	8	6	24	16	40
14.	Greece	3+1*	-	4+1*	+1*	10+1*	3+1*	17+3*	3+2*	20+5*
15.	Austria	4	3	7	1	5	3	16	7	23
16.	Belarus	3	2	-	6	3	7	6	15	21
17.	Finland	9	-	3	1	4	3	16	4	20
18.	Belgium	1	3	1	2	4	6	6	11	17
19.	Slovenia	1	1	2	3	5	5	8	9	17
20.	Norway	2	2	6	2	-	4	8	8	16
21.	Croatia	2	-	6	1	4	3	12	4	16
22.	Slovakia	-	3	1	10	1	1	2	14	16
23.	Czech republic	-	2+1*	-	-	+1*	7+5*	+1*	9+6*	9+7*
24.	Lithuania	-	2	4	1	6	-	10	3	13
25.	Israel	1	-	4	-	7	1	12	1	13
26.	Ireland	-	4	-	5	1	-	1	9	10
27.	Switzerland	1	2	1	1+1*	1	1	3	4+1*	7+1*
28.	Serbia	4	-	1	-	-	-	5	-	5
29.	Faroe Islands	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	3
30.	Iceland	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3	3
31.	Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	+1*	+1*	+1*	+1*	+2*
32.	Estonia	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
33-34.	Portugal	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
33-34.	Turkey	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Sports swimming		267	265	265	266	269	260	801	791	1592
Marathon swimming		31*	28*	32*	28*	31*	29*	94*	85*	179*
Total medals received		298	293	297	294	300	289	895	876	1771
European Watersports Championships held in the third stage from 1993 to 2018										
XXI	1993, Sheffield	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	48+6*	48+6*	96+12*
XXII	1995, Vienna	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	16+2*	17+2*	48+6*	49+6*	97+12*
XXIII	1997, Seville	16+2*	16+2*	16+3*	16+2*	16+1*	16+2*	48+6*	48+6*	96+12*
XXIV	1999, Istanbul	19+2*	19+2*	19+2*	20+2*	21+2*	18+2*	59+6*	57+6*	116+12*
XXV	2000, Helsinki	19+2*	20+2*	19+2*	18+2*	19+2*	19+2*	57+6*	57+6*	114+12*
XXVI	2002, Berlin	19+3*	19+3*	19+3*	19+3*	19+3*	19+3*	57+9*	57+9*	114+18*
XXVII	2004, Madrid	19+3*	19+3*	19+3*	19+3*	20+3*	19+3*	58+9*	57+9*	115+18*
XXVIII	2006, Budapest	20+3*	19+3*	18+3*	19+3*	20+3*	19+4*	58+9	57+10*	115+19*

XXIX	2008, Eindhoven	20	20	20	20	20	20	60	60	120
XXX	2010, Budapest	20+4*	20+3*	20+4*	21+3*	20+5*	19+3*	60+13*	60+9*	120+22*
XXXI	2012, Debrecen	20	20	20	21	22	19	62	60	122
XXXII	2014, Berlin	22+4*	22+3*	20+4*	20+3*	22+4*	21+3*	64+12*	63+9*	127+21*
XXXIII	2016, London	21	21	21	21	22	21	64	63	127
XXXIV	2018, Glasgow	23+4	20+3	23+4	20+3	23+4	20+3	69+12	60+9	129+21
Sports swimming		270	267	266	266	276	263	812	796	1608
Marathon swimming		31*	28*	32*	28*	31*	29*	94*	85*	179*
Total: Sports + Marathon		301	295	299	294	307	292	906	881	1787

Note: 1) "*" indicates marked medals received by team swimmers in marathon swimming;

2) in mixed swimming (2010, 2014) 3x5 km, participants - 2 husbands, medals are counted male's teams of swimmers

The second ten ranking of swimmers-winners' achievements were the countries of the continent: Romania-49 medals, Denmark-44, Poland-40, Greece-20+5*(marathon), Austria-23, Belarus-21, Finland-20, Belgium-17, Slovenia-17, Norway-16 medals. The third ten countries are: Croatia-16 medals, Slovakia-16, Czech Republic-9+7*, Lithuania-13, Israel-13, and Ireland-10, Switzerland-7+1*, Serbia-5, Faroe Islands-3, Iceland-3 medals. The final European ranking of swimmers-winners was: Bulgaria+2*(marathon), Estonia-1, Portugal-1, Turkey-1 medal.

Conclusions:

1. The monitoring of the success of the swimmer teams performance for the first time in the theory and practice of swimming development provided an objective analysis of swimmers performance at the European Watersports Championships from 1926 to 2018. (Stages I-II-III). This contributes to the real identification of the European swimming ranking state, and therefore, a higher level of swimming skills for young people for the entire period of long initial development, gradual development and stabilization in each individual European country in terms of the quality of medals and the total number of prize medals received by the strongest swimmers of the continent.

2. At the first stage of the initial European Watersports Championships held from 1926 to 1950, the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of identified objective rating of swimming skills were included: Germany-45 medals, the Netherlands-40, Hungary-26, the UK-24, Sweden-20, France-18, Denmark-17, Italy-9, Belgium-5, and Yugoslavia-5 medals. The second ten less successful countries were: Czechoslovakia-4 medals, Austria-2, Finland-1, Switzerland-1 medal.

3. At the second stage of stabilization of the European Watersports Championships held from 1954 to 1991, the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of identified objective rating were teams-swimmers: GDR-287 medals, the USSR-167, Germany-123+1* (marathon), the Netherlands-77+1*, Hungary-68+2*, the United Kingdom-66, Italy-45+4*, Sweden-45, France-30, Romania-17 medals. The second ten less successful countries in terms of swimming skills were European teams: Poland-15 medals, Denmark-13, Spain-13, Yugoslavia-12, Bulgaria-10, Czechoslovakia-

9+1*, Switzerland-3+3*, Norway-3, Belgium-2, Ireland-1, Portugal-1, Finland-1 medal.

4. At the third stage of the current European Watersports Championships held from 1993 to 2018, the top ten most successful countries in terms of the level of swimming skills for the results of the identified objective rating, were the following continent countries: Germany-177+42* (marathon) medals, Italy-158+37*, Russia-160+29*, France-132+16*, Hungary-138+9*, the United Kingdom-145+2*, Sweden-106, the Netherlands-84+21*, Ukraine-82+1*, Spain-61+7*. The second ten countries are: Romania-49 medals, Denmark-44, Poland-40, Greece-20+5*, Austria-23, Belarus-21, Finland-20, Belgium-17, Slovenia-17, Norway-16 medals. The third ten countries are: Croatia-16 medals, Slovakia-16, Czech Republic-9+7* (marathon), Lithuania-13, Israel-13, Ireland-10, Switzerland-7+1*, Serbia-5, Faroe Islands-3, Iceland-3 medals. The European ranking of the most swimmers is completed by: Bulgaria+2*, Estonia-1, Turkey-1, Portugal-1 medal. The data obtained with full confidence assert the real ranking of countries in swimming based on real facts.

5. Further research in swimming should be carried out in order to identify the indicators of the objective rating of the teams-swimmers at all the previous World Student Games, World Championships and The Olympic Games. It is in this case that it is possible to speak reliably and confidently about the actual predominance of the level and degree of development of the theory and practice of developing swimming skills among young people of different ages and genders in a country not only from the European continent but also in the today's sporting world.

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