



FINA OLYMPIC MARATHON SWIM QUALIFIER 2012

28 swimmers to confirm Olympic dream in Setubal (POR)

Setubal Bay, Portugal, is set to host the **FINA Olympic Marathon Swim Qualifier 2012** from June 9-10, where **more than 100 athletes** (41 women and 61 men) from the current and up-and-coming open water swimming elite will be vying for the remaining 28 spots in the discipline at the 2012 London Olympic Games.

The first 9 women and 9 men to touch home will book a place for the Olympic marathon swimming event. Another 10 (5 women and 5 men) will qualify through continental representation (taking into account the best ranked athlete not yet qualified).

On the programme since the last 2008 Beijing Olympics, open water swimming (or "marathon swimming") will consist of a **10km race with a total 50 swimmers** (25 women and 25 men) taking the departure in Serpentine Lake at London's Hyde Park on August 9 (for women) and 10 (for men).

20 swimmers (10 women and 10 men) have already secured a London berth at the 2011 FINA World Championships in Shanghai. Two places (one in each gender category) are automatically reserved for Great Britain, the host.

The first to win a gold medal at the Olympics in marathon swimming was Russia's **Larisa Ilchenko**, victorious among women in 1h59m27s. Britain's **Keri-Anne Payne** and **Cassandra Patten** were silver and bronze medallists, respectively. **Maarten van der Weijden** (NED) took out the men's event in a time of 1:51:51 while **David Davies** (GBR, second) and **Thomas Lurz** (GER, third) completed the podium.

Among the experienced field of pool and open water swimmers to watch in Setubal are 2008 Olympic silver-medallist **David Davies** (GBR) and Olympic champion **Oussama Mellouli** (TUN), **Petar Stoychev** (BUL), **Csaba Gercsak** (HUN), **Valerio Cleri** (ITA), **Karla Sitic** (CRO), **Ophelie Aspod** (FRA), **Yumi Kida** (JPN), **Linsy Heister** (NED), **Natalie Du Toit** (RSA) and **Anna Guseva** (RUS).