

LARGER THAN
LIFE
A CELEBRATION OF GREATNESS



Ian Thorpe

(October 1982)

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INTRODUCTION

Ian James Thorpe is a **former Australian freestyle swimmer**.

In 2001, he became the first person to win six gold medals in one World Championship. In total, Thorpe has won **eleven World Championship golds**.

Thorpe is **the only person** to have been named **'World Swimmer of the Year' four times by 'Swimming World Magazine'**.

His athletic achievements made him one of Australia's most popular athletes, with his philanthropy and clean image earning him further recognition as the **Young Australian of the Year in 2000**.

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Thorpe was born in Milperra, in the western suburbs of Sydney, and was educated at East Hills Boys High School. Although Thorpe's father, Ken, excelled as a cricketer, Ian did not have the same ability. Instead, he followed his sister, Christina, into competitive swimming.

Thorpe made his first impact in 1997, when he was selected at 14 for the Australian team at the Pan Pacific competition in Fukuoka, Japan. He also excelled in the 200 metre freestyle and the 200 metre butterfly.

CAREER

1998 – He became the youngest men's world champion in swimming history when he won the 400 metres freestyle final at the world championships in Perth, aged 15. He collected four gold medals at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur as well as claiming his first world record as a member of the 4x200m relay.

1999 - Won his **first world title with a world record in the 200m freestyle** at the world short-course championships in Hong Kong. He grabbed his first individual long-course (50m) world record when he broke Kieren Perkins's five-year-old 400m mark by almost two seconds at the Pan Pacs in Sydney.

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2000 – He broke his 400m world record on the opening day of the Australian Olympic Trials, then he broke the 200m on each of the next two days to qualify for his first Olympics. He won three gold and two silver medals at the Sydney Olympics, aged 17. He broke his 400m world record on the first night of competition and then won a second gold medal 80 minutes later when he anchored the 4x100m relay to a last-stroke win over the United States in world record time

2001 – He added the 800m **freestyle world record at the Australian championships, as well as breaking his** 200m mark and winning the 100m and 400m titles. He won a record six records in 200m, 400m and 800m and the 4x200m relay. **His 200m record of one minute 44.06 seconds still stands today.**

2002 – He won six gold medals at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester and **lowered his 400m world record to 3:40.08, which also still stands today.**

2003 – He **became the first swimmer to win the same event at three world championships when he won the 400m at Barcelona.** He also won the 200m and the 4x200m to take his career tally of world championship medals to 11 gold, one silver and one bronze.

2004 – He won the 400m at Athens and the 200m, beating van den Hoogenband and Michael Phelps in swimming's "**race of the century**". **He won a silver in the 4x200m relay and a bronze in the 100m to become the first man in 100 years to win medals in 100m, 200m and 400m at the same Olympics.** He took his overall Olympic medal collection to five gold, three silver and one bronze.

2005 – He took a year off from swimming, missing the world championships in Montreal.

2006 – He returned to training and qualified for the Australian team for the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne but pulled out after contracting glandular fever. He broke his hand in training and moved to Los Angeles. He announced his retirement on November 21.

Quotes

“When you've had to work hard for something and you've got the best you can out of yourself on that given day, that's where you get satisfaction from.”

Quiz

1. In What was the name of Ian Thorpe's father?
2. In which year did he become the first man in 100 years to win medals in 100m, 200m and 400m at the same Olympics.
3. In which year did he take off from the swimming?

Send your answers with your name and department to one2one@clarislifesciences.com

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