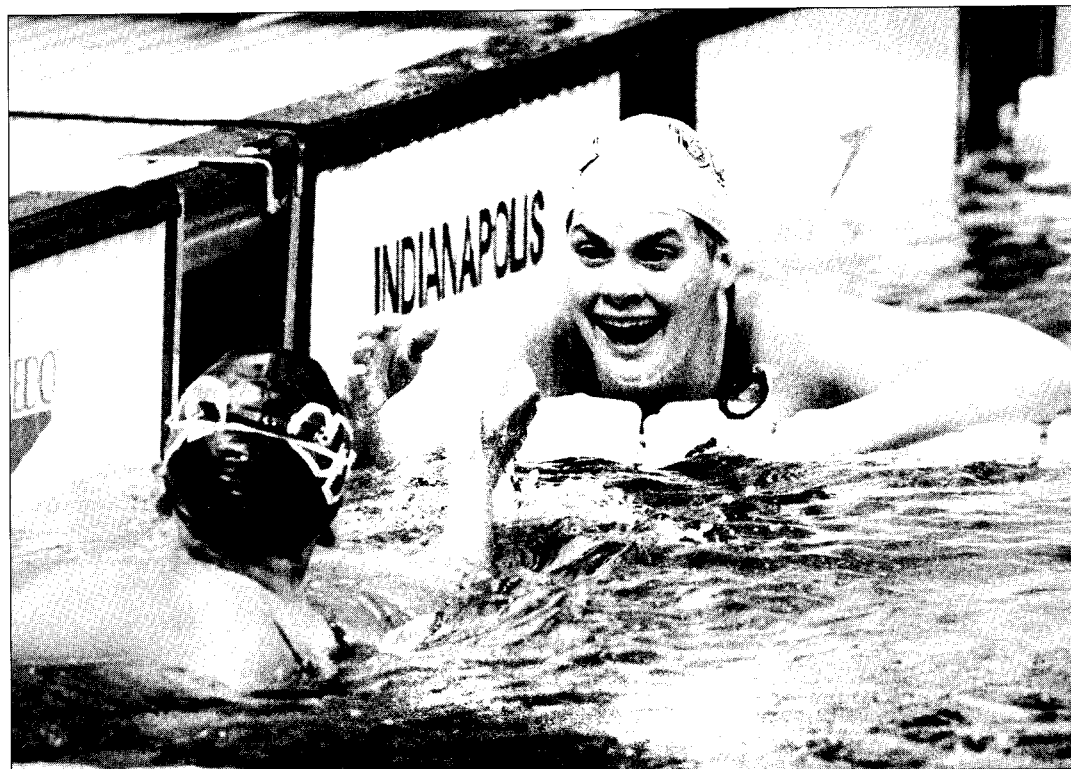


Freestyle



Haislett (facing) and Thompson both broke the two-minute barrier for the first time to go 1-2.

Nicole Haislett is the world champion in the 100 free, but her best event may be the 200. The Florida sophomore recorded the fastest time in the 200 since the 1988 Olympics, leading the entire race to win in 1:58.65 with Jenny Thompson two meters back. The 1-2 by Haislett and Thompson was the reverse of the previous night in the 100.

"Last night I was happy to make the team, but I was kind of sad at the same time because I didn't do as well as I wanted to," said Haislett. "I talked to my roommate at Florida (Veronica Meinhard, who is from Venezuela), and she said, 'You've been working for this for your whole life and you just made the Olympic team, and you're bitching about it.' That kind of woke me up. I said, 'You're right,' and I got refocused for today.

"I really like the 100. It's a fun event. But I've been told all along by coaches that I should be a middle distance swimmer."

Haislett was ahead of the pace of American record holder Sippy Woodhead for the opening 100. Her winning time makes her the second-fastest U.S. performer ever. Woodhead, whose mark of 1:58.23 set in 1979 is the

oldest American record, went faster than Haislett's victory two other times.

Both Haislett and Thompson made sizable drops as the first U.S. women under two minutes since 1988. Haislett's previous best was 2:00.31; Thompson 2:01.45. Thompson had never finished higher than fourth in the 200 at a nationals. But her performance wasn't a complete surprise because the Stanford freshman swam 1:45.31 unshaved in the 200 yard

free at the Pac-10 Conference meet in early February and exhibited her speed the previous day with a world record in the 100.

"The 200 is not one of my favorite events, but I have gained some experience in it," says Thompson. "The 100 is still my better event since I am a sprinter."

Janet Evans, who was the silver medalist in the 200 at the World Championships and had the previous best time (2:00.27) of all the finalists, never was a factor in the final and wound up seventh as the seventh-seed.

"I didn't want to swim the 200 free and only did to keep in the mode of the meet" said Evans, who added that in her two years at Stanford she could swim it better because she didn't do as much distance work as the past year at Texas.

200 FREE

WORLD RECORD

Heike Friedrich, GDR 58.36 1:57.55

East Berlin, June 18, 1986

AMERICAN RECORD

Cynthia Woodhead, USA 28.13 58.31 1:28.38 1:58.23

Tokyo, Sept. 3, 1979

1992 U.S. OLYMPIC TRIALS FINALISTS (March 2, 1992)

Nicole Haislett, 19, University of Florida 27.92 58.02 1:28.58 1:58.65

Jenny Thompson, 19, Seacoast/Stanford 28.12 58.28 1:29.17 1:59.98

Whitney Hedgepeth, 20, University of Texas 28.66 59.28 1:30.16 2:00.86

Sarah D. Anderson, 21, Golden Bear 29.04 59.77 1:30.60 2:01.01

Lisa Jacob, 17, Mission Viejo 28.76 59.62 1:30.48 2:01.27

Kim Small, 21, Marauders 29.01 59.50 1:30.67 2:01.84

Janet Evans, 20, Texas Aquatics 28.89 59.65 1:30.91 2:02.37

Karen Kraemer, 22, Stanford 28.93 59.56 1:31.27 2:02.74