

Brent Hayden

Biography

Country: Canada
Sport: Swimming
Height: 6'5" / 1.95 m
Weight: 190 lbs / 86 kg
Born: 10/21/1983
Hometown: Mission, BC
Nickname: Soup

Brent Matthew Hayden is a former international swimmer from Canada. Hayden was a bronze medal winner in the 100m freestyle at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. He was co-World Champion in the same event in 2007 with Filippo Magnini of Italy. By winning the 100m, Hayden became the first Canadian in 21 years to win a gold medal at the World Aquatic Championships; he was also the first Canadian to appear in the 100m final at the Olympics since Dick Pound at the 1960 Summer Olympics and the first Canadian to win an Olympic medal in the 100m. Hayden adds a further three silver and one bronze medal to his World Championship totals. He is the current reigning Commonwealth Games champion in both the 50m and 100m freestyle events. In addition, Hayden is currently the Canadian record holder in the 200m, 100m and 50 m freestyle in both the short-course and long-course. He has also held the World Record in the 4×100m medley relay, and the 4×200m freestyle relay.

Athens was the location of Hayden's first Olympics when he took part in the 2004 Summer Olympics as part of the Canadian swimming team. It was a disappointing first Olympic appearance for Brent as inexperience took its toll on the 20 year old. It was further worsened the night before the Closing Ceremonies, a week after his competition ended, when Brent was mistaken for a protester and beaten up and arrested by the riot police because he was "tall and wearing a dark shirt" as quoted by one of the officers according to Hayden's account of the event. The injuries sustained left him unable to compete at the World Short Course Championships which were being held a month later. His best individual finish in Athens was 13th in the 200 m freestyle event.

In Melbourne for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, Hayden won his first major medal for a non-relay event when he won silver in the 50 m freestyle, an event he had not even intended on racing. He also added three bronze medals at the same game, two from the relays and one in the 200 m freestyle final. These medals were a premonition of the success to come for Hayden.

Before flying to Australia for the 2007 World Championships in Melbourne, Hayden got a call from his parents at night to come to the Maple Ridge Hospital to see his grandfather. Brent knew it would be the last time he would ever see him again. Drifting in and out of consciousness, Brent was able to get his grandfather's attention for enough time to say "I'm going to win you a medal at the World Championships". After a practice at staging camp in Maroochydore on the Australian Sunshine Coast, Brent's coach told him the grave news that his grandfather had passed away. His resolve to keep his promise was evident as he, from Lane 7, managed to tie for the gold medal with defending World Champion Italian swimmer Fillipo Magnini in the 100m freestyle. This was the first World Championship for the Canadians since Victor Davis in 1986. In the process of winning the gold, Hayden had also shaved down his own national record in the event down to 48.43 and he also added a bronze from the World's in the 4 x 200m freestyle relay. As a result of his victory, the mayor of Mission declared May 26, 2007 as "Brent Hayden Day". As well, the Mission Marlins Swim Club renamed their swim meet to the "Brent Hayden Invitational" and a large mural, painted on the wall of the Mission Leisure Centre, by artist Pascal A. Pelletier was unveiled.

At the 2008 Summer Olympics, he was a member of the Canadian team that finished sixth in the 4×100m freestyle event and fifth in the 4×200m event. Although he qualified third fastest out of sixteen swimmers, one place ahead of Michael Phelps, he did not compete in the semi-finals of the 200m freestyle. Instead, his coach decided to rest him for the 4×100m freestyle, which was held that same day (Hayden set a Canadian record in the opening leg with a time of 47.56). He finished out of the finals in the 100 m freestyle, again suffering disappointment at the Olympics. He was promoted as the best Canadian swimmer at these games, but only fellow long-distance freestyle Ryan Cochrane managed to medal for the nation in the pool.

Hayden attended at the 2009 World Aquatics Championships. He failed in the defense of his world title, placing fourth with a new Canadian record time of 47.27 seconds and missing the podium by 0.02 seconds. César Cielo Filho was the world champion, and set a new

world mark of 46.91 seconds. Hayden was the only swimmer in the final to choose not to wear one of the newest "super suits". He chose to wear the Speedo LZR which was the suit worn by most swimmers at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, whereas every other swimmer in that final was wearing either the new Arena X-Glide or Jaked (both of these suits are completely covered in polyurethane).

Hayden showed strong character in the pool at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, clocking the fastest times in his respective events (50m, and 100m freestyle); setting a Games record in the 100m freestyle during day one, in the 4x100m freestyle relay final. And then breaking his Games record again, in the individual final with an outstanding time of forty-seven seconds, 98 hundredths—0.56 seconds ahead of silver medallist, Simon Burnett. Hayden held the number one ranking in the world at the time in this event (also being ahead of 22-time Olympic medallist, Michael Phelps). In the 50m freestyle, he won gold with a Games record time of 22.01 seconds. The next season brought further success for Hayden as went on to touch out for the silver on a long glide in the 100 m freestyle final at the 2011 World Aquatics Championships. He had gone into the World Championships having set the previous world's best time the last season. His further successes came as Hayden was working on improving his starting 50 m as was known more as a finisher in the last 50.

After disappointment struck at the previous two Olympic games for Hayden where he failed to qualify for the 100 m finals he became the first Canadian to do so in swimming's glamour event since Dick Pound did so in 1960. He went on to win bronze medal for Canada at the 2012 Summer Olympics in the 100 meter men's freestyle after a strong start placed him in medal contention at the turn. Gold and silver went to USA's Nathan Adrian and world champion James Magnussen of Australia, while Hayden beat out Brazil's Cesar Cielo and France's Yannick Agnel for third. Fittingly, Dick Pound presented the medals. Though only a bronze, the medal was redemption for Hayden who was visibly ecstatic at winning an Olympic medal at long last. With his Olympic medal finally in his possession he said that "There are so many times when you can dream of something but a million out of a million and one times it won't come true. This was one of the things that I was very fortunate as a human being to have happen to me." Hayden announced his retirement from the sport shortly after the competition at his medal presentation event held at the Canada House in London.

International Results (2002-2012)

2012

Summer Olympic Games – London, Great Britain

- 100m Freestyle – Bronze (47.80 sec)
- 4x100m Medley Relay – 8th

Mare Nostrum Tour - Barcelona

- 100m Freestyle – Gold
- 50m Freestyle – Gold

Mare Nostrum Tour – Canet, France

- 100m Freestyle – Silver
- 50m Freestyle – Silver

Mare Nostrum Tour – Monte Carlo, Monaco

- 100m Freestyle – Silver

2011

World Aquatic Championships – Shanghai, China

- 100m Freestyle – Silver (47.95 sec)

2010

Mare Nostrum Tour – Monte Carlo, Monaco

- 100m Freestyle – Gold
- 200m Freestyle – Silver

Mare Nostrum Tour – Barcelona, Spain

- 100m Freestyle – Gold
- 200m Freestyle – Silver

Mare Nostrum Tour – Canet, France

- 100m Freestyle – Silver
- 200m Freestyle - Gold

Pan Pacific Championships – Irvine, USA

- 100m Freestyle – Silver (48.19 sec)
- 50m Freestyle – Bronze (21.89 sec)

Commonwealth Games – Delhi, India

- 100m Freestyle – Gold (48.98 sec - CWG Record)
- 50m Freestyle – Gold (22.02 sec - CWG Record)

2009

World Aquatic Championships – Rome, Italy

- 100m Freestyle – 4th (47.27 sec)

World Cup – Moscow, Russia

- 100m Freestyle – Silver
- 200m Freestyle – Silver

World Cup – Stockholm, Sweden

- 100m Freestyle – Silver
- 200m Freestyle – Gold

World Cup – Berlin, Germany

- 100m Freestyle – Gold
- 200m Freestyle – Silver

2008

Summer Olympic Games – Beijing, China

- 100m Freestyle – 12th (48.12 sec)
- 4x200m Freestyle Relay – 5th

2007

World Aquatic Championships – Melbourne, Australia

- 100m Freestyle – Gold *tie (48.45 sec)
- 4x200m Freestyle Relay – Bronze

2006

Commonwealth Games – Melbourne, Australia

- 50m Freestyle – Silver (22.19 sec)
- 100m Freestyle – Bronze
- 200m Freestyle – Bronze
- 4x100m Freestyle Relay – Bronze

Pan Pacific Championships – Victoria, Canada

- 100m Freestyle – Gold (48.54 sec – PPC Record)
- 50m Freestyle – Bronze
- 4x200m Freestyle Relay – Bronze

World Cup – Belo Horizonte, Brazil

- 100m Freestyle – Gold
- 200m Freestyle – Gold

2005

World Championships – Montreal, Canada

- 100m Freestyle – 6th
- 200m Freestyle – 4th
- 4x100m Freestyle Relay – Silver
- 4x200m Freestyle Relay – Silver

World Cup – Belo Horizonte, Brazil

- 200m Freestyle – Gold

2004

Summer Olympic Games – Greece, Athens

- 4x200m Freestyle Relay – 5th (7:13.33)

2003

World Championships – Barcelona, Spain

- -100m Freestyle – 11th
- -4x200m Freestyle Relay – ???
- -4x100m Freestyle Relay – ???

2002

Commonwealth Games – Manchester, England

- 4x100m Freestyle Relay – Bronze
- 4x100m Medley Relay – Bronze

Pan Pacific Championships – Yokohama, Japan

- 100m Freestyle – 4th (49.52 sec – my first Canadian record!)
- 4x200m Freestyle Relay – Bronze
- 4x100m Freestyle Relay – Bronze

Awards

- 2013 BC Sports Hall Of Fame Induction
- 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal
- 2012 Canadian Male Athlete of the Year (*Finalist*)
- 2011 Swimming/Natation Canada "Race of the Year"
- 2010 Swimming/Natation Canada "Race of the Year"
- 2007 Canadian Male Athlete of the Year
- 2007 BC Athlete of the Year
- 2007 Canadian Swimmer of the Year
- 2006 BC Athlete of the Year
- 2006 Canadian Swimmer of the Year
- 2005 Canadian Partners of the Year
- 2005 BC Athlete of the Year (*Finalist*)
- 2005 Canadian Swimmer of the Year

- End -