

= Aaron Peirsol =

Aaron Wells Peirsol ( born July 23 , 1983 ) is an American former competition swimmer and backstroke specialist who is a former world champion and world record @-@ holder . He is a three @-@ time Olympian and seven @-@ time Olympic medalist ( five gold , two silver ) . As a member of the U.S. national team , he holds the world record in the men 's 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay ( long course ) . Individually , he currently holds the world record in the 100 @-@ meter and 200 @-@ meter backstroke events ( long course ) . In February 2011 , Peirsol announced his retirement , saying , " I ended up doing everything I set out to do . "

Peirsol 's successes have earned him the American Swimmer of the Year Award once . He has won a total of thirty @-@ six medals in major international competition , twenty @-@ nine gold , six silver , and one bronze spanning the Olympics , the World , Pan American , and the Pan Pacific Championships .

In his Olympic debut at the 2000 Summer Olympics , at the age of 17 , Peirsol won a silver medal in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke . Four years later , at the 2004 Summer Olympics , Peirsol won gold in the 100 @-@ meter and 200 @-@ meter backstroke ( sweeping the backstroke events ) and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . In his third Olympics ( 2008 Summer Olympics ) , Peirsol won gold in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . He came short of his success he had in Athens by winning silver in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , finishing behind Ryan Lochte .

= = Personal life = =

Peirsol was born in Irvine , California , in 1983 , the son of Scott and Wella Peirsol . His father is a captain and his mother is a retired dental hygienist . He has one younger sister , Hayley , who is also a swimmer . Peirsol and his sister are the only sibling duo to medal at the same FINA World Championships ( in 2003 ) . He is a 2002 graduate of Newport Harbor High School in Newport Beach , California . Peirsol attended the University of Texas at Austin and graduated in 2006 , majoring in government . He was the 2003 NCAA Swimmer of the Year . After finishing his second year of collegiate eligibility , Peirsol signed with Nike , Inc . , thus turning professional . Peirsol trained under the guidance of Eddie Reese and Kris Kubik .

Peirsol is also involved in a number of charities . He is an ambassador for the Global Water Foundation and the Surfrider Foundation . He is also a spokesman for Oceana , which is the largest international ocean conservation and advocacy organization .

= = Swimming career = =

= = = 2000 ? 2002 = = =

Peirsol qualified for his first Olympics at the age of seventeen after finishing second to Lenny Krayzelburg in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke at the 2000 U.S. Olympic Team Trials . Peirsol also competed in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , but did not qualify for the event , finishing 4th . At the 2000 Summer Olympics , Peirsol finished second to Krayzelburg in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke . Afterwards Peirsol said , " I think I 'm getting to a point where I 'm becoming more of a threat to ( Lenny ) and I think he knows that . "

At the 2001 National Championships , with Krayzelburg not competing , Peirsol qualified for the 2001 World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka , Japan , in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . Peirsol 's time in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke was the second @-@ fastest ever , with only Krayzelburg 's world record faster . At the 2001 World Aquatics Championships , Peirsol won gold in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke with a time of 1 : 57 @. @ 13 , a championship record .

Peirsol started off 2002 with the first world record of his career in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke ,

bettering Krayzelburg 's mark set in 1999 . In his first major competition of 2002 , Peirsol won five medals ( three gold , one silver , one bronze ) at the 2002 FINA World Swimming Championships ( 25 m ) in Moscow . In Moscow , he was a part of the American team that broke the world record in the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay and he broke the 200 @-@ meter backstroke world record . At the 2002 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Yokohama , Japan , Peirsol won gold in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . Combined with Brendan Hansen , Michael Phelps , and Jason Lezak , Peirsol set the world record in the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay to break the previous record set in 2000 .

= = = 2003 World Championships = = =

At the 2003 World Aquatics Championships in Barcelona , Spain , Peirsol won gold in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . He also won a silver medal in the 4 × 200 @-@ meter freestyle relay . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in a time of 53 @.@ 61 , a championship record . His time was just 0 @.@ 01 s off Lenny Krayzelburg 's world record . Peirsol participated in the 4 × 200 @-@ meter freestyle relay with Michael Phelps , Nate Dusing , and Klete Keller to win silver behind Australia . Peirsol then competed in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke and won gold in a time of 1 : 55 @.@ 92 , almost two seconds ahead of second @-@ place finisher Gordan Kožulj of Croatia . Peirsol also competed in the 50 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . In the 50 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol finished out of medal contention with an 8th @-@ place finish . In his last event , Peirsol competed in the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay with Brendan Hansen , Ian Crocker , and Jason Lezak . The final time of 3 : 31 @.@ 54 was a new world record , bettering the old mark from 2002 .

= = = 2004 Summer Olympic Games = = =

At the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team Trials , Peirsol won individual titles in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke . Four years after finishing in 4th place at the 2000 U.S. Olympic Team Trials , Peirsol won the 100 @-@ meter backstroke title , beating Lenny Krayzelburg . Peirsol was the only individual in the field to break 54 seconds and was just off Krayzelburg 's world record . In the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won in a world record time of 1 : 54 @.@ 74 , bettering his previous record of 1 : 55 @.@ 15 set in 2002 . He beat his closest competitor , Michael Phelps , by more than a second .

At the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens , Greece , Peirsol won gold in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke , sweeping the backstroke events , and the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in a time of 54 @.@ 06 , 0 @.@ 29 s ahead of second @-@ place finisher Markus Rogan of Austria . In his second event , the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in an Olympic record time of 1 : 54 @.@ 95 and completed a clean sweep of the backstroke events . Rogan again finished second to Peirsol , 2 @.@ 40 s back . An initial disqualification alleged that Peirsol had made an illegal turn during the 200 @-@ meter backstroke race . Having been improperly entered , the disqualification was eventually overturned . In his last event , the 4 × 100 @-@ meter medley relay , Peirsol combined with Brendan Hansen , Ian Crocker , and Jason Lezak to win gold in a world record time of 3 : 30 @.@ 68 , 2 @.@ 94 s ahead of second @-@ place finisher Germany . While leading off the relay , Peirsol broke the world record in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke with a time of 53 @.@ 45 , bettering Krayzelburg 's time of 53 @.@ 60 set in 1999 .

Peirsol caused minor controversy when he accused Kosuke Kitajima of Japan of using an illegal dolphin kick in the 100 @-@ meter breaststroke final when compatriot Brendan Hansen lost by 0 @.@ 17 s .

= = = 2004 FINA Short Course World Championships = = =

Shortly after the 2004 Summer Olympics , Peirsol competed at the 2004 FINA World Swimming Championships ( 25 m ) in Indianapolis where he won three gold medals . His first gold medal came in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke in a time of 50 @.@ 72 , a new championship record . Three days later , Peirsol competed in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay . In the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in a world record time of 1 : 50 @.@ 52 , bettering his old mark of 1 : 50 @.@ 64 ( set earlier in 2004 ) and finished 2 @.@ 02 s ahead of Matt Welsh of Australia . Peirsol then competed in the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay with Brendan Hansen , Ian Crocker , and Jason Lezak to win gold in a world record time of 3 : 25 @.@ 09 , 4 @.@ 63 s ahead of Australia . Peirsol also competed in the 50 @-@ meter backstroke but finished out of medal contention .

= = = 2005 World Championships = = =

At the 2005 World Championship Trials , the selection meet for the 2005 World Aquatics Championships , Peirsol won individual titles in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke . In the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won and broke his own world record with a time of 53 @.@ 17 , bettering his time of 53 @.@ 45 set in Athens . In the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol easily won with a time of 1 : 55 @.@ 13 .

At the 2005 World Aquatics Championships in Montreal , Quebec , Peirsol won gold in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in a time of 53 @.@ 62 , just 0 @.@ 01 s off his championship record set two years earlier in Barcelona . For his second event , the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won in dominating fashion . His time of 1 : 54 @.@ 66 was a new world record and 1 @.@ 97 s ahead of second @-@ place finisher Markus Rogan . Peirsol then competed in the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay with Brendan Hansen , Ian Crocker , and Jason Lezak to win gold in a time of 3 : 31 @.@ 85 , 3 @.@ 23 s ahead of second @-@ place finisher Russia . Peirsol also competed in the 50 @-@ meter backstroke but finished out of medal contention .

= = = 2006 Pan Pacific Championships = = =

At the 2006 National Championships , the selection meet for the 2006 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships and the 2007 World Aquatics Championships , Peirsol won individual titles in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke . At the 2006 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Victoria , British Columbia , Peirsol won gold in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in a championship record time of 53 @.@ 32 . Peirsol was the only individual in the field to break 54 seconds and beat his closest competitor , Ryan Lochte , by 0 @.@ 70 s . Peirsol earned his second gold in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke with a world record time of 1 : 54 @.@ 44 , bettering his previous mark of 1 : 54 @.@ 66 set last year in Montreal . At the time , Peirsol held nine of the fastest times posted in the event and defeated second @-@ place finisher Michael Phelps by 2 @.@ 37 s . Peirsol then competed in the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay with Brendan Hansen , Ian Crocker , and Jason Lezak to win gold in a time of 3 : 31 @.@ 79 , a new championship record .

= = = 2007 World Championships = = =

At the 2007 World Aquatics Championships in Melbourne , Australia , Peirsol won one gold and one silver medal . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won gold in a world record time of 52 @.@ 98 , bettering his time of 53 @.@ 17 set in 2005 . Peirsol became the first man in the event to go under 53 seconds and beat Ryan Lochte by 0 @.@ 52 s . At the time , Peirsol held five of the fastest times posted in the event . At one point during the first 50 @-@ meters , Peirsol was a full meter behind Ryan Lochte , and at the turn , Peirsol was in third place behind Liam Tancock and Lochte . But Peirsol had a superior finish to over @-@ take both swimmers . After the

race , Peirsol thanked Lochte for the fast start , which he attributed to the world record . In the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol placed second to Lochte and lost his world record he set in 2006 . Throughout the race , Peirsol was in first and at the 150 @-@ meter mark , Peirsol was ahead of Lochte 1 : 24 @.@ 56 to 1 : 25 @.@ 05 . But Lochte had a strong finish to over @-@ take Peirsol for the win . For Peirsol , it was his first international loss in the event since the 2000 Summer Olympics . Peirsol did not have a chance to swim in the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay final because the United States was disqualified in the heats .

= = = 2008 Summer Olympic Games = = =

At the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials , Peirsol won individual titles in the 100 and 200 @-@ meter backstroke , repeating his results from the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team Trials . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won ahead of Matt Grevers with a world record time of 52 @.@ 89 , lowering his previous mark of 52 @.@ 98 set last year . In his second event , the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won in a time of 1 : 54 @.@ 32 , equalling Ryan Lochte 's world record set last year . Lochte finished a close second , just 0 @.@ 02 s behind Peirsol .

At the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing , China , Peirsol won gold in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke and the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay . He also won silver in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol was the heavy favorite for gold , with him being the world @-@ record holder and the defending Olympic champion . For the final of the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol was swimming in lane two , having qualified fifth in the semi @-@ finals . At the first 50 @-@ meters in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke final , Peirsol was in second place behind Liam Tancock , who took it out in 25 @.@ 11 . Peirsol was 0 @.@ 54 s behind Tancock at the turn . However , after the turn , Peirsol overtook Tancock , who eventually placed sixth , and won the gold . Peirsol 's final time of 52 @.@ 54 was a new world record , bettering his previous mark of 52 @.@ 89 set last month . After the race , Peirsol said , " I 'm a little bit excited , a little bit relieved , absolutely elated . " In his second event , the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol placed second to Ryan Lochte 1 : 54 @.@ 33 to 1 : 53 @.@ 94 . In winning the gold , Lochte broke the world record tie he and Peirsol shared in the 200 @-@ meter backstroke . In his last event , the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay , Peirsol combined with Brendan Hansen , Michael Phelps , and Jason Lezak to win gold in a world record time of 3 : 29 @.@ 34 , lowering the old mark of 3 : 30 @.@ 68 set four years ago in Athens .

= = = 2009 World Championships = = =

At the 2009 National Championships , the selection meet for the 2009 World Aquatics Championships , Peirsol won individual titles in the 100- and 200 @-@ meter backstroke . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won in a time of 51 @.@ 94 , reclaiming the world record from Aschwin Wildeboer Faber . In winning the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol became the first person to swim the event in under 52 seconds and it was the sixth time he set the world record in the event . In the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol defeated Ryan Lochte and reclaimed the 200 @-@ meter backstroke world record he lost in Beijing . Peirsol also competed in the 100 @-@ meter butterfly but did not qualify for the event in Rome , finishing in third place .

At the 2009 World Aquatics Championships in Rome , Peirsol won two gold medals . In his first event , the 100 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol surprised many after he failed to make the final , which he attributed to a miscalculation of his own position in the semi @-@ finals . Peirsol said , " I thought I was going faster . I am very disappointed . I completely misjudged my race . I have to go on , pick myself up and focus on my next events . " But Peirsol 's world record in the 100 @-@ meter backstroke would stay in place after the final . In his second event , the 200 @-@ meter backstroke , Peirsol won the gold in a time of 1 : 51 @.@ 92 , breaking his own world record of 1 : 53 @.@ 08 by more than a second . Peirsol then competed in the 50 @-@ meter backstroke but did not advance past the heats . In his last event , the 4 x 100 @-@ meter medley relay , Peirsol combined with Eric Shanteau , Michael Phelps , and David Walters to win gold in a world record

time of 3 : 27 @. @ 28 , lowering the old mark of 3 : 29 @. @ 34 set a year ago in Beijing . While leading off the relay , Peirsol broke the championship record in the 100 @- @ meter backstroke with a time of 52 @. @ 19 , bettering the previous mark of 52 @. @ 26 set by Junya Koga .

= = = 2010 = = =

At the 2010 National Championships , Peirsol placed second in both the 100- and 200 @- @ meter backstroke . In the 100 @- @ meter backstroke , Peirsol placed second to David Plummer , who touched just 0 @. @ 03 s ahead . For Peirsol , it was his first loss in the 100 @- @ meter backstroke at a national championships since he placed 4th at the 2000 U.S. Olympic Team Trials . In the 200 @- @ meter backstroke , Peirsol placed second to Ryan Lochte , who finished 0 @. @ 70 s ahead .

At the 2010 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Irvine , California , Peirsol won gold in the 100 @- @ meter backstroke and the 4 x 100 @- @ meter medley relay . Peirsol 's first gold came in the 100 @- @ meter backstroke . Initially , Peirsol did not qualify to swim in the medal @- @ awarding final because only a maximum of two swimmers from one country could enter in the finals and David Plummer and Ryan Lochte owned the top two American spots . However , Lochte withdrew from the 100 @- @ meter backstroke and as a result , Peirsol advanced to the finals . Peirsol won the gold in a time of 53 @. @ 31 , breaking his own championship record set in 2006 . Peirsol then competed in the 200 @- @ meter backstroke but did not qualify to swim in the medal @- @ awarding final , with Lochte and Tyler Clary taking the top two American spots . In his final event , the 4 x 100 @- @ meter medley relay , Peirsol won gold along with compatriots Mark Gangloff , Michael Phelps , and Nathan Adrian . This would be the last race of his international career . When the competition was over , Peirsol said he put his swimming equipment in a locker and walked away .

= = Retirement = =

On February 2 , 2011 , at the age of twenty @- @ seven , Peirsol announced that he was officially retiring from professional swimming . This ended months of speculation after Peirsol withdrew from his spots in both the 2010 FINA World Swimming Championships ( 25 m ) in Dubai and the 2011 World Aquatics Championships in Shanghai . Peirsol said he contemplated retirement after the 2008 Summer Olympics . In 2010 , he said he had no further goals and found it difficult to swim because he " ended up doing everything ( he ) set out to do . " He added , " Things outside of the sport started to interest me . " Peirsol said it was " poetic " that he ended his career at the same pool he trained in as a kid at the 2010 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships . Peirsol plans to go to graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin to study political science .