

FINA WORLD  
AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS



# AROUND THE RINGS

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20 YEARS AT #1

SPECIAL EDITION

**BARCELONA**

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# Discover Tomorrow

## TOKYO ● 2020



# Discover Tomorrow

Tokyo 2020 will deliver dynamic celebration and global inspiration. It will unite the power of the Olympic and Paralympic Games with the unique values of the Japanese people and the excitement of a city that sets global trends. And will guarantee superb Games that help to promote the Olympic Values for new generations in this challenging and fast-changing era for sport.



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\* Photo: Welcome home parade in Tokyo for London 2012 athletes - 20 Aug. 2012



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\*\* Exterior design for Olympic Stadium The first prize of the New National Stadium International Concept Design Competition

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# A Note from the Publisher

## Barcelona and its aquatics legacy are never far from my mind.

Sheila Scott Hula, *Publisher*

Several times every day in my office, I look at one of my proudest possessions and smile: it's a framed copy of my participation certificate from the 1992 Summer Games – my first Olympics.

Immediately beneath the certificate is a photo of me taken at the last event of those Games – the gold medal round between Italy and Spain in water polo. I'd never seen water polo before and had no idea how physical the competition could be. And I had no idea that would not only become a match for the ages, but also a story that still gives me goosebumps every time I reminisce.

It was the first time Spain ever reached a medal round in water polo. Both teams were overseen by Croatian-born coaches who nearly came to blows when their players got into a shoving match. Watching from the sidelines, I wondered if we were going to witness a baseball-type brawl. At the end of regulation, the two countries were tied 7-7. Three overtimes were required before Italy pulled ahead to win the gold, 9-8.

At the end, both teams were on the deck on their respective sides. The Italians had their arms around each other's shoulders, dancing in a line – and cheering their hosts.

“España! España! Ess-span-YUH!!”

When talk turns to intangibles such as the Olympic Spirit and Olympic Values, that is the moment that always replays in my mind. I've been to nine Olympics now, but that is the one story I invariably tell and the one that still sums up everything that is good about the Games.

I don't know if there will be moments with that level of drama as the 15th FINA World Aquatics Championships play out – but I hope so. One look at the schedule makes clear there are numerous opportunities, with six FINA disciplines taking center stage at some point during the 16 days of competition.

While most eyes will be fixed on the pool, the General Congress on July 26 will decide important issues relating to the FINA constitution, citizenship, the use of underwater cameras, and protests, among other things. Mark Bisson, our European editor, and E.B. Hula III, our assignment editor, will be on the scene to record every decision.

Whether it's meetings in a hotel ballroom, or spirited competition in the water, *Around the Rings* will cover every development – just as we have for the last 20-odd years. Readers know they can count on *ATR* for the most accurate, incisive coverage of the Olympic Movement to be found anywhere.

But back to water polo. Italy and Spain are set to appear in each of the first three rounds, although not against each other. When the championships get to the 44th match on Aug. 3, I'm secretly hoping there will be a repeat of '92. Except this time, perhaps, the Spaniards will be dancing on the deck, cheering “Italia! Italia!” ■



▲ Sheila Scott Hula watches Italy edge Spain for the gold medal in water polo at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.



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20 YEARS AT #1  
SINCE 1992

# 4 Questions for the FINA President

Interview by Ed Hula

**Around the Rings:** How is this time around different from the 2003 World Aquatics Championships in Barcelona?



▲ Julio Maglione (Getty Images)

**Julio Maglione:** Ten years have gone by, and the evolution in aquatic sports has been tremendous. Our World Championships, FINA's major event and privileged showcase of our five disciplines, are presently one of the most important competitions in the sport international calendar, gathering impressive figures in terms of TV audience – in Rome 2009 and Shanghai 2011, we have reached the impressive mark of 3.5 billion cumulative TV viewers, a number we want to naturally improve in the Catalan capital. We have been also receiving a great media input during our major event.

Barcelona 2003 also marked the appearance at the highest level of a “certain”

Michael Phelps, who since then became the greatest swimmer of all time and the best Olympian in history. He helped promote aquatics, but his retirement in 2012 was followed by memorable performances from other stars capable of shining at the highest level and motivating the worldwide youth to practice our sport.

In Barcelona itself, the 2013 edition will see a greater concentration of venues in the Montjuic area, allowing for a more intense “experience” of the Championships. I am also sure that new stars in all aquatic disciplines will shine at this competition. This is the secret of our success – great athletes and valuable support from the National Federations. Finally, the introduction of high diving for the first time in the history of this competition will add a thrilling discipline in the program, which will surely attract many thousands of fans in the Barcelona port.

**ATR:** What are your goals for these next four years as FINA president?

**JM:** In general, our goals are:

- Improve the value of our sport
- Progress in the relation with National Federations and continental associations
- Strengthen our role in the Olympics
- Create programs with world organizations for developing swimming in the five continents

More in detail, we would like to reinforce FINA's policy of development towards our National Member Federations, either by directly supporting them for the participation at our World Championships, or by organizing clinics and seminars to enhance the technical knowledge of their staff. In 2014, new programs on new platforms will be launched to improve our strategy on this matter.



▲ An 18-year-old Michael Phelps was among the breakout stars of Barcelona 2003, winning four gold and two silver medals. (Getty Images)

Finally, the organization of the first edition of the FINA World Aquatics Convention, in 2010, is also a powerful development tool. This is a privileged opportunity for the National Federations and business partners to come together and further discuss new ways of co-operation.

Moreover, we want to continue raising the value of our competitions, namely the FINA World Championships, FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) and our five annual major rendezvous – Swimming World Cup, Water Polo World League, Diving World Series, Synchro World Trophy and 10km Marathon Swimming World Cup – by improving the prize money distributed to our stars and also by adopting new ideas and innovative competition formats and programs to meet the needs of our fans and media. FINA also aims at facilitating the participation of the National Federations in these events and guarantees a long-term prize money policy.

Finally, our desire is to enhance even more the added-value brought by FINA to the Olympic Games, both in terms of the organization of the sport and competition program (with its great stars and outstanding performances), but also in terms of the spectacular venues provided for our events.

**ATR:** Aquatics was promoted to the top category of a new revenue-sharing formula for the Rio 2016 Olympics devised by the IOC Executive Board. How will FINA benefit from this going forward?

**JM:** This promotion compensates the efforts of FINA and National Federations to deliver a great Aquatics program and events at the Olympics. We have always said that we are a pillar of the Games, and this recent IOC independent study recognized this status. We have a great Sport, marked by an enormous diversity – speed

(swimming), endurance (open water swimming), game (water polo), acrobatics (diving) and aesthetics (synchronized swimming) – many stars, and superb performances. We attract the interest of spectators to our events, we compete in world class venues, and we are hugely covered by the media. The images of our disciplines are appealing and attractive. Our sport is based on the principles of Olympism, fair-play and universality. We have all the ingredients to be an essential player in the Olympic arena, and the inclusion in Group A is a fair tribute to FINA's strategy and aquatics' value.

**ATR:** Anything else we should be asking about, or anything else you wanted to mention?

**JM:** The success of the FINA President is due to the support he receives from the National Federations, their officials, coaches and athletes, and from the continental organizations on strengthening the image of our sport worldwide. And in these four years, since 2009, I really appreciated the commitment of our Members, their hard work, which led to this great success. I will continue supporting their development, their improvement and their participation at the FINA events. I am sure that together we can continue making our sport greater, more important and more recognized worldwide. ■

# Busy Agenda for Barcelona Congress

Julio Maglione tells *Around the Rings* running unopposed for reelection as FINA president in Barcelona is “a great honor and an even greater responsibility”.

Written by Mark Bisson

In this respect, the IOC member and NOC president from Uruguay finds himself in the same position as in 2009 when he won another four-year mandate.

“Modestly, I think that FINA has developed a very solid strategy during the last four years, leading to a better recognition of our sport, an enhancement of our competitions, and a stronger position in a very challenging sport business environment,” he says.

The 203 national federations agree that FINA is moving in the right direction, he adds, supporting them in their daily activities and doing its utmost to guarantee their independence and allow the participation of their best athletes.

“It is therefore important to maintain this co-operation and count on the support of the Bureau, national federations, and FINA committees and commissions.”

Maglione is scheduled to present a report on the FINA Bureau’s activities since the last general congress in 2009. The Barcelona congress will elect the Bureau, the swimming federation’s decision-making body, for the period 2013-2017 and approve changes to update FINA’s Constitution “and make it more adapted to the new environment we are living in,” says Maglione.

“In 2011, in Shanghai, we held an Extraordinary Congress in which our Constitutional Rules were completely revised and now, in Barcelona, we will finish this important task and be ready for building up a more dynamic and modern FINA,” he tells *ATR*.

“One of the main changes relates to the maximum number of terms (two) for the president, honorary secretary and honorary treasurer and the maximum age of 80 years old for its members.”

Another key moment on the congress agenda is a decision on the location of the 2019 World Aquatics Championships.

Asked what he makes of the four bids for the event, the 77-year-old says: “The FINA World Championships

has become a very attractive event for the cities/national federations aiming at hosting FINA’s major event.

“The significant impact and importance of the legacy is measured in terms of sport, infrastructure, touristic and social development.”

He adds: “Saying this, we have four strong candidates – Baku (AZE), Budapest (HUN), Gwangju (KOR) and United Arab Emirates (city to be confirmed) – for the organization of our 2019 and 2021 edition of the FINA World Championships, presenting solid bids and showing great interest in organizing this prestigious event.”

Maglione leaves open the question of whether the Barcelona congress would award the 2021 World Aquatics Championships.



▲ A flash mob at water polo venue Piscines Bernat Picornell marks 50 days until Barcelona 2013. (RFEN)

“The Bureau may consider that the level of the bids is fulfilling the FINA requirements and may also award the organization of the 2021 edition of the championships,” he explains.

“This strategy aims at guaranteeing the stability of FINA’s calendar for the years to come, to reinforce the co-operation with national federations and organizing committees, giving them enough time to prepare and build a great event.”

He notes that the main improvement is related to the inclusion, from 2015 in Kazan, of the FINA World Masters Championships in the program of the FINA World Aquatics Championships.

“We are therefore moving from a universe of 2,500/3,000 athletes to a joint organization capable of mobilizing up to 14,000 competitors,” Maglione says.

In addition to the General Congress, FINA is holding six technical congresses for each of its disciplines – swimming, water polo, diving, synchronized swimming, open water swimming and masters.

“These congresses are the privileged opportunity, every four years, to review our technical rules so that our sport can gain in simplicity and understanding,” Maglione tells *ATR*.

“This year, many national federations as well as our technical committees have made valuable proposals to enhance our disciplines and make our sport even more attractive. All these recommendations will now be submitted to the congresses’ delegates for their approval.” ■

# Double Duty Ahead During Doha 2014

Preparations for the 12th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) are “going very well,” FINA President Julio Maglione tells *Around the Rings*.

Written by Matthew Grayson

“The co-operation of the Qatar Olympic Committee and Doha authorities has been outstanding,” he says.

“The venue is fantastic and the Organizing Committee is doing a great effort in providing optimal conditions for all those attending the championships.”

Hamad Aquatic Center in the Aspire Sports Complex will host competition from Dec. 10 to 14 of 2014.

The program mimics that of swimming at the Summer Olympics with the addition of 50m breast, 50m fly, 50m back as well as 100m IM races and the exclusion of open-water events.

Mixed relays may also be included following their debuts during the 2012 FINA World Cup.

With the exception of Indianapolis, Indiana, in 2004, every edition of the so-called “short-course” world championships

has featured a sizeable increase in the number of athletes attending. Istanbul 2012 drew a record 958 swimmers from 162 countries, figures Doha 2014 should top.

The capital of Qatar will be particularly abuzz in this case as FINA also holds its 3rd World Aquatics Convention alongside the competition.

“The first two editions – in 2010 in Punta del Este, Uruguay, and 2012 in Moscow – were held as separate organizations, but for the sake of a bigger participation and interest from the National Federations, we decided in the future to combine this event with the championships,” explains Maglione.

“Doha is ready to hold a superb Convention so that it can also reinforce its position as an important hub in the Middle East,” he adds.

According to Maglione, the Qatar Olympic Committee will also help organize a youth program during the championships to provide young swimmers with courses both practical and theoretical.

“This will lead to a great development for the FINA National Federations, not only in the Middle East but also around the world,” the FINA President tells *ATR*. ■

## 2016, 2018, Beyond

■ Windsor, Canada will host the 13th World Swimming Championships (25m) in 2016. The decision of the FINA Bureau came in December on the sidelines of Istanbul 2012. Other bidders were Hong Kong, Abu Dhabi and Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

■ At its December meeting in Istanbul, the FINA Bureau notably did not award the 2018 edition to another of the bidders, which was a possibility. Instead, a separate process for 2018 will be organized at a later date.



Hamad Aquatic Center in Doha is an increasingly frequent stop for FINA. (Getty Images)

# Maglione: “Everything Will Be Perfect” in Kazan

Kazan is “working very hard” to stage a great 16th World Aquatics Championships in 2015, FINA President Julio Maglione tells *Around the Rings*.

Written by Matthew Grayson

“In the last months leading to Barcelona, we have established a very close contact with Kazan, and this cooperation will certainly increase after the rendezvous in the Catalan capital,” he says.

“Kazan, and the Republic of Tatarstan, is investing a lot in sport, and the FINA World Championships is an opportunity to reaffirm their status as the Russian capital of sport.”

Four venues in the western Russian city will stage competition in July of 2015.

Swimming will take place in a makeshift pool constructed atop the pitch at New Rubin Kazan Stadium, which was built for the 2013 Summer Universiade earlier this month but will also host matches during FIFA’s 2017

Confederations Cup and 2018 World Cup. For FIFA, the capacity will reach 17,000 seats.

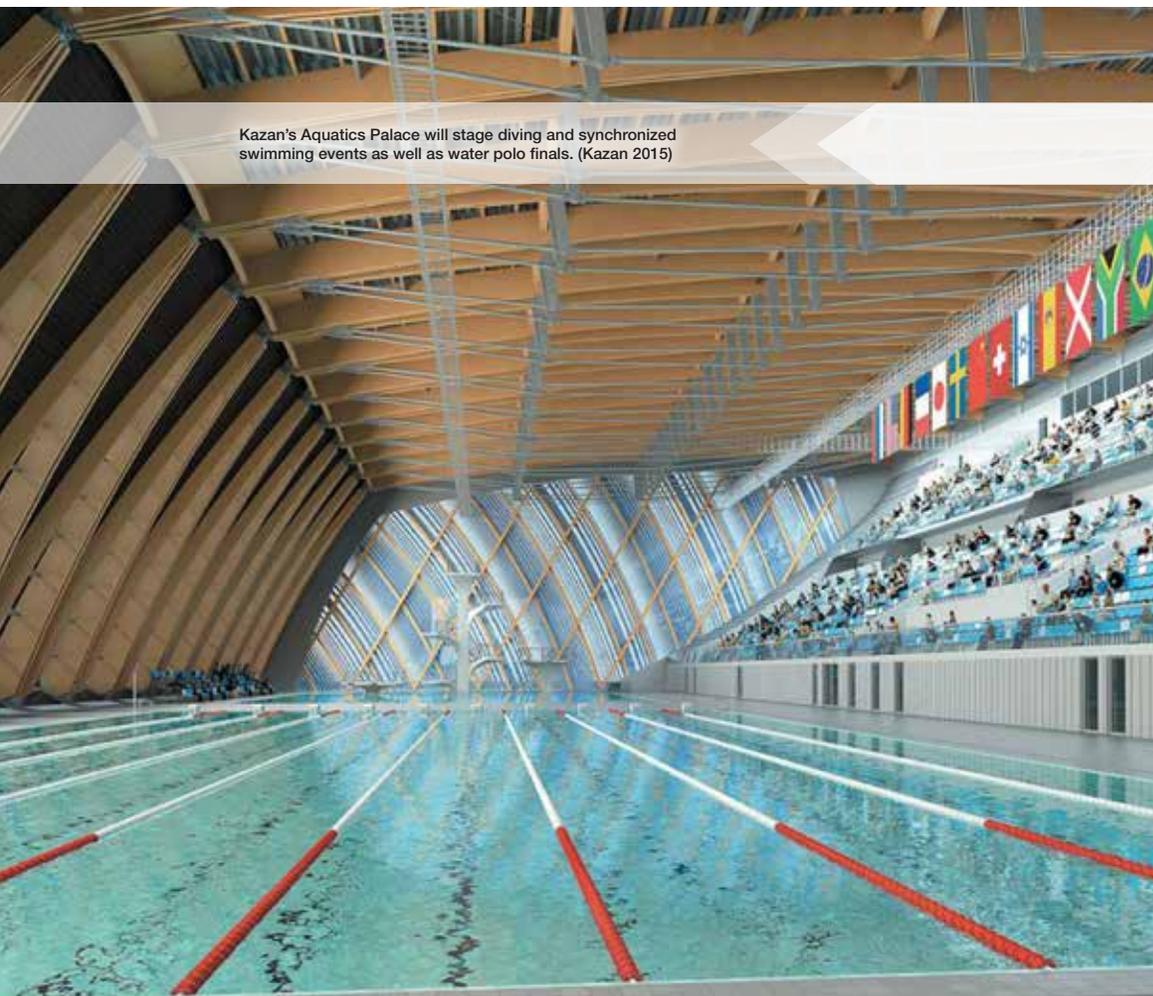
Diving, synchronized swimming and water polo finals are scheduled for Kazan’s new 4,500-seat Aquatics Palace. A temporary area nearby will seat 3,000 spectators for the water polo preliminaries.

Open water events will be held at the Rowing Center on Middle Kaban Lake, where stands for another 3,000 spectators will be built.

The Athletes Village is located nearby the Rowing Center, and three training pools are available at Orgsintez, Burevestnik and Olymp.

“The venues in Kazan are amazing and the entire city is getting mobilized for the FINA World Championships,” Maglione tells ATR.

“The staging of the Universiade [...] is an excellent occasion to evaluate Kazan’s readiness to host FINA’s major event, but I am sure that everything will be perfect.” ■



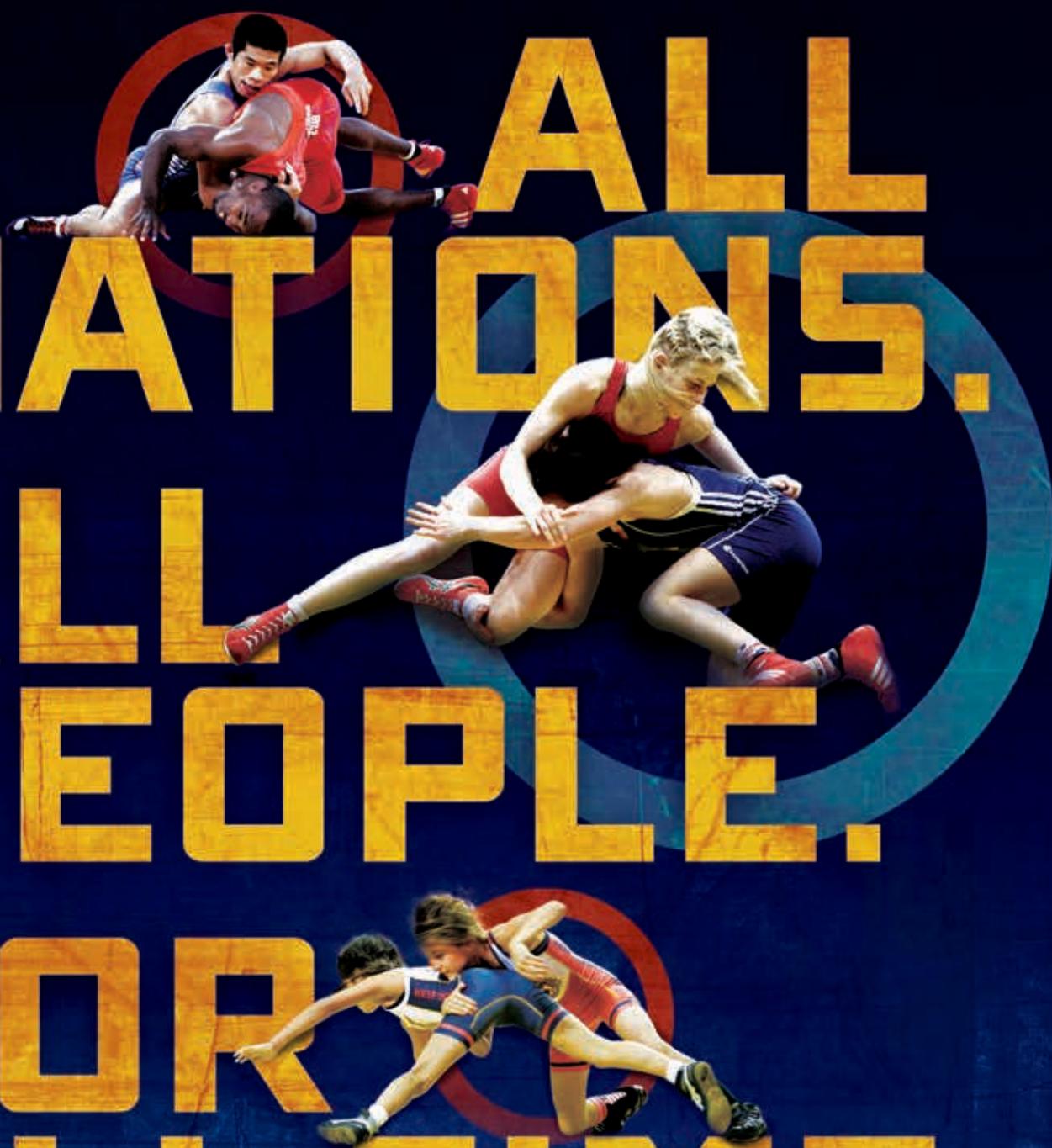
Kazan’s Aquatics Palace will stage diving and synchronized swimming events as well as water polo finals. (Kazan 2015)

## 2017, 2019, Beyond

■ Guadalajara, Mexico will host the 2017 FINA World Aquatics Championships at venues built for the 2011 Pan American Games. Scotiabank Aquatics Center will stage swimming, diving and synchronized swimming with water polo bound for Telcel Tennis Complex and open-water events for Puerto Vallarta.

■ Here in Barcelona, the FINA Bureau will decide the host of the 2019 World Aquatics Championships. Bidders include Baku, Azerbaijan; Budapest, Hungary; Gwangju, South Korea; and United Arab Emirates (city to be confirmed).

■ Also in Barcelona, the Bureau could decide to award the 2021 edition to another of the bidders should they fulfill FINA requirements.



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