

Will Olympians soon be swimming in the Seine? Paris officials track water quality

July 29 2024, by Robin Foster



Paris officials said Sunday they are confident the Seine will be clean enough for Olympic triathletes to swim in the storied river this week, despite the fact that officials had to cancel a practice run Sunday over

worries about water quality.

The men's triathlon is scheduled for Tuesday, while the women are set to compete Wednesday. The triathletes were supposed to have a chance to familiarize themselves with the course on Sunday, but organizers said they nixed the swimming leg after officials met to discuss water quality tests, the Associated Press reported.

Water quality in the Seine is closely linked to the weather. The decision to cancel the test swim was made after heavy rain fell during the Olympic opening ceremony on Friday and the [stormy weather](#) continued Saturday. Since no more rain is forecast, officials expect athletes will get the experience of racing in the Seine.

"We've seen what were the dynamics of the Seine over the past few weeks, and that's what makes us confident," Paris Deputy Mayor Antoine Guillou said during a news conference on Sunday, the AP reported.

After similar recent rains, the river's water quality has returned to safe levels within 24 to 48 hours, he noted.

Olympic organizers echoed that confidence.

"We are still very confident with the [weather forecast](#) for the next 48 hours, the water quality will improve," said Paris 2024 spokesperson Anne Descamps, the AP reported. "Thanks to all the work that has been undertaken by our public stakeholders, we saw the water quality of the River Seine has improved significantly."

But if the water does not improve enough by race time, the first plan is to postpone the triathlon events by a few days. If the water quality still isn't good enough, the swimming portion of the triathlon will be canceled

and the athletes will only compete in the running and biking portions, the AP reported.

For over a century, swimming in the Seine has been banned, mostly due to poor water quality. So, Paris spent \$1.5 billion to prepare the river ahead of the Olympics, the AP reported. Along with the swimming portion of the triathlon, the marathon swimming event is expected to be held in the river later in the Games.

Tests by monitoring group [Eau de Paris](#) had showed water quality levels were acceptable as of last Tuesday, but that was before Friday's downpour.

Paris officials did not release more recent [water quality](#) data, saying the governing bodies of each sport have the measurements and it's up to them to make decisions on whether events should go forward in the river.

More information: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has more on [stormwater management](#).

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