

Members of the GDR National Swim Team (1971)

Abstract

For the GDR, excellence in sports was a means of securing prestige on an international level, and athletes were thus regarded as “diplomats in tracksuits.” Starting in 1968, the GDR sent its own team to the Olympic Games. Between 1968 and 1988, the GDR won 153 gold medals, distinguishing itself in the sport of swimming in particular. Special sports schools for children and adolescents ensured the continuation of this tradition by nurturing athletic talent at a young age. The dark side of this success, however, was the systematic doping of GDR athletes by doctors and trainers who were little concerned with the attendant health risks. In all, doping affected approximately 10,000 athletes, including many who were underage. This photo shows the GDR national swim team, which competed against the U.S. team in an international meet in Leipzig in 1971. Photo by Gerhard Kiesling.

Source



Source: Members of the GDR swim team competing against the USA in Leipzig. Date: 1971. Photo: Gerhard Kiesling.

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