

Diving - Overview

Diving is a water sport in which the strength, flexibility, and acrobatic skills of an individual get exercised. In this sport, the diver has to jump from a springboard that is situated at a certain height. When the player is in the air, he has to perform some acrobatic skill before diving in the swimming pool. As it requires acrobatic skill performance with a touch of gymnastic dance, hence often the diving players are dancers too.



The objective here is to jump from a prescribed height into the swimming pool from a springboard. While being in the air, you have to perform various acrobatic body movements. More the movements of the body done, more points you can fetch. This sport is played under men and women category.

A Brief History of Diving

Most of the traces of this sport were found to be in England during 1880's. Apart from sport category, it was a favourite pass time for the ancient people. It is the English Armature swimming association which started the plunging championship in 1883. During the early 19th century, Sweden and Germany used to play this sport as a popular gymnasium category.

With the slow evolution and popularity of this sport, many variants such as Fancy diving and Plain diving started to evolve. Gradually jumping from height also gets popularity and first of such type of event was organised in 1893 in Highgate ponds. In 1904, plain diving was introduced into the Olympics whereas fancy diving was introduced in 1908's London Olympic Games.



Participating Countries

Diving comes under jumping and falling event. Since its introduction to Olympic Games, the popularity and demand of this sport grew exponentially in different nations. Many Asian and non-Asian countries have their active participation in this sport.

Some of the major dominating Asian countries in diving include China, Russia, North Korea, South Korea, and Malaysia. In 2014 Asian Games, **He Chao** of China bagged the gold medal in men's category and **Shi Tingmao** of China bagged gold medals in women's category in 1m springboard category.

Similarly, many non-Asian countries have shown their talents in events like Summer Olympics. Countries like Mexico, Australia, and Canada dominate most of the diving competitions. In 2012 Summer Olympics, **Llya Zakharov** of Russia bagged the gold medal in men's category while **Wu Minxia** of China bagged gold in women's category in 3m springboard.

Diving - Body Positions

Diving is a process of jumping from a springboard into a pool of water by performing some twists and turns in the air. But it requires heavy control over body to perform this. Let's first learn the basics of diving and then we will proceed to various techniques.

Body Positions in Diving

Variety of dives is performed by the athletes in the competition. However; there are four basic body positions, as explained below.

- **Straight** – In this type of posture without bending your hips or knees, your body has to be in line with the fluid.
- **Pike** – Unlike in straight position, the bending of body at hips is allowed but such is not the case with knees.
- **Tuck** – In this type of posture, you have to tightly hold your arms with your lower leg.
- **Free** – Free body positions are made to twist in air. Any possible combination of two or more positions can be used over here.

These positions are referred to by the letters A, B, C and D respectively.



Straight Position



Pike Position



Tuck Position

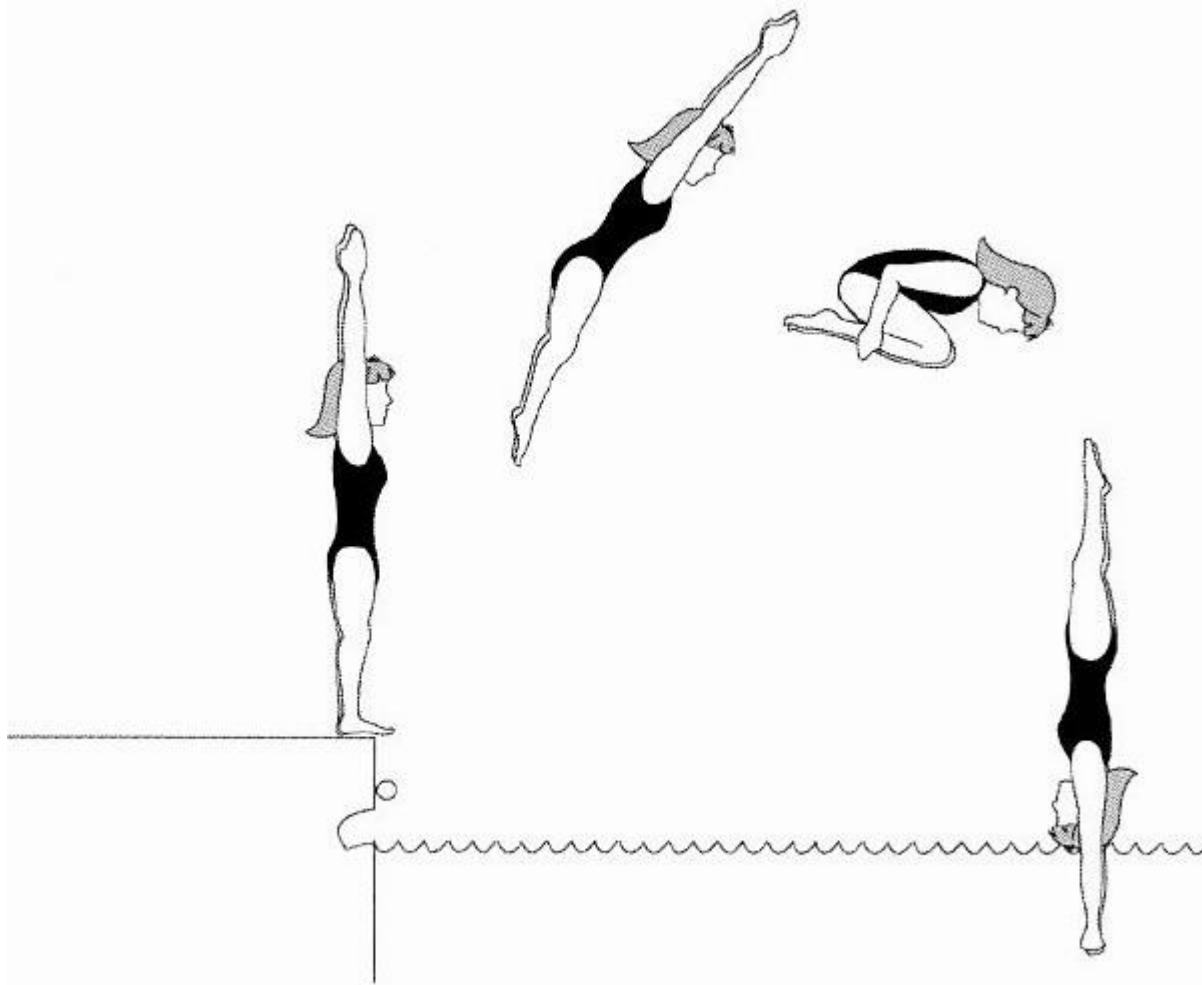


Free Position

Diving - Dive Groups

There are basically six types of diving groups related to springboard and platform diving. Among the six basic approaches, four are somersaulting towards or away from the springboard or platform. A forward approach and a backward press are also included in this. In the fifth approach, you can perform any of the above four approaches with twisting action and then finally with some more somersaults and twists, armstand is performed.

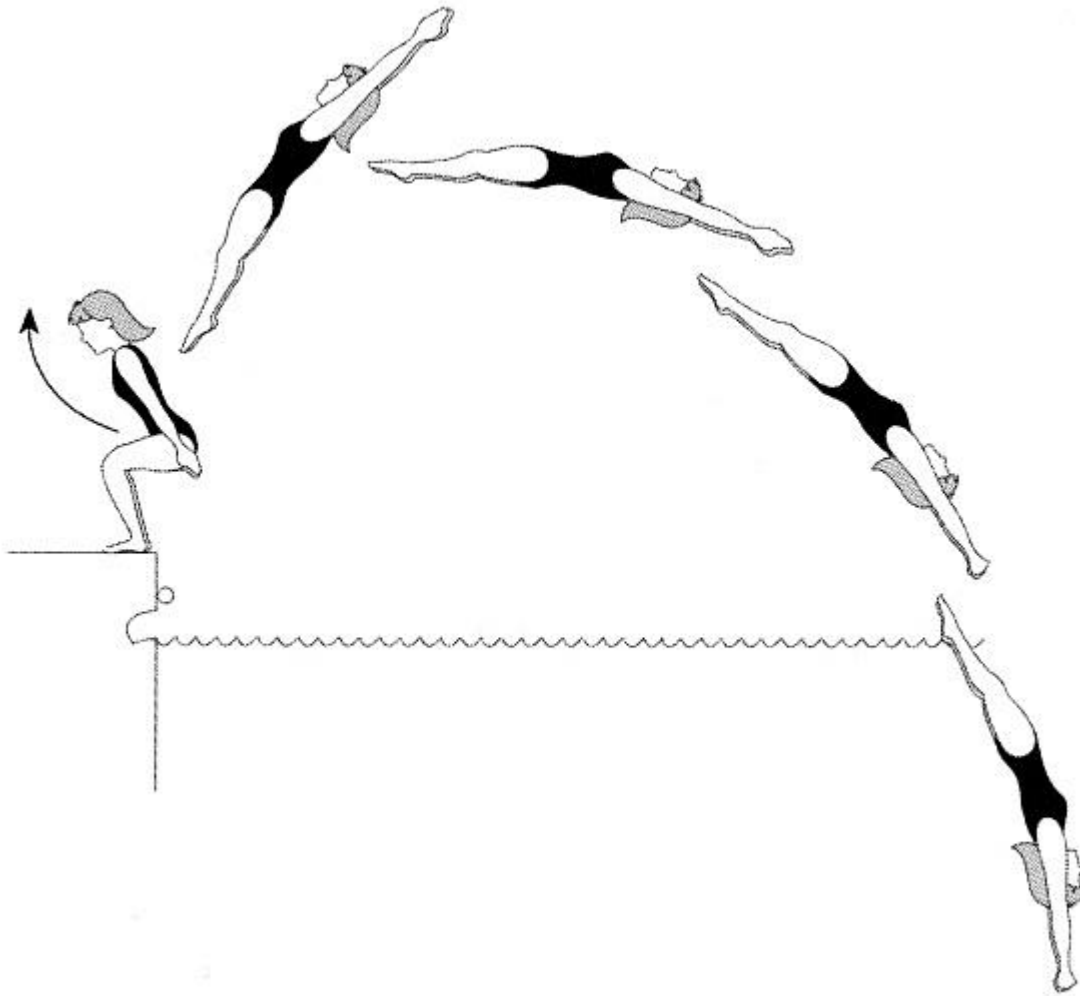
Forward Dives



In this type of dive, face of the diver will be towards the end of the board and water. As soon as the diver reaches the end of the springboard, he/she has to rotate in the forward direction. Some of the dives present in the forward group are –

- Performing two and half somersaults in pike position.
- In tuck position, performing 1 and half somersaults.
- Performing forward dive in pike position
- In tuck position, performing four and half somersaults.

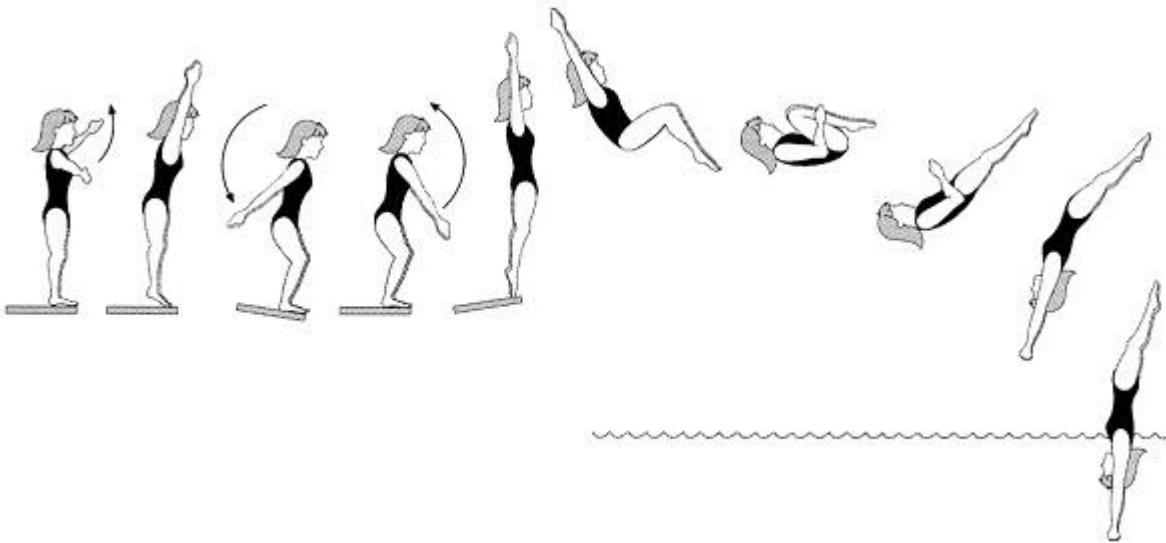
Back Dives



In this type of dive, a diver has to stand on the springboard with his back towards the water. After doing a backward press, the diver needs to take off. He has to perform half or three and a half somersaults after take-off. Some examples of the dives in backward group are –

- Performing a back dive in straight position.
- While being in straight position, performing back one and half somersault.
- Performing two and half somersaults in pike position.
- Performing three and half somersaults in tuck position.

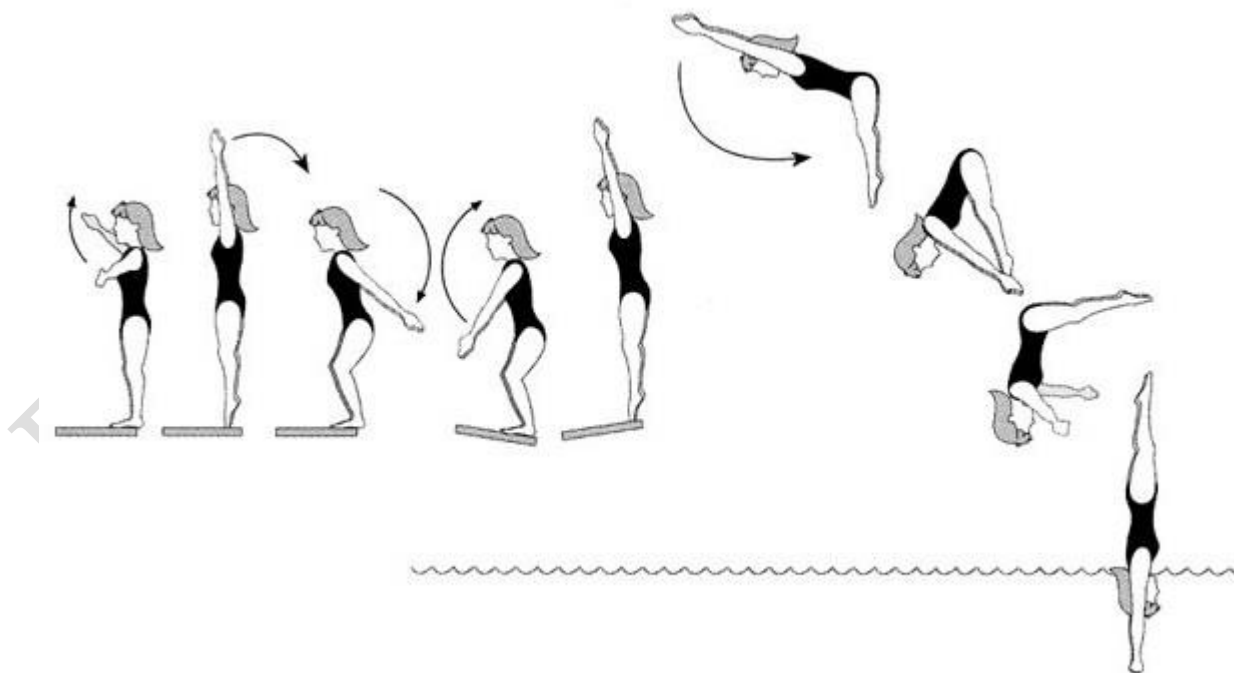
Reverse Dives



In this type of dive, the diver faces the end of the board and water after doing a forward approach. He has to rotate back towards the board while moving forward. Some of the dives in this group are –

- In tuck position, performing reverse dive.
- In pike position, performing one and half somersaults.
- In pike position, performing two and half somersaults.
- In tuck position, performing three and half reverse somersaults.

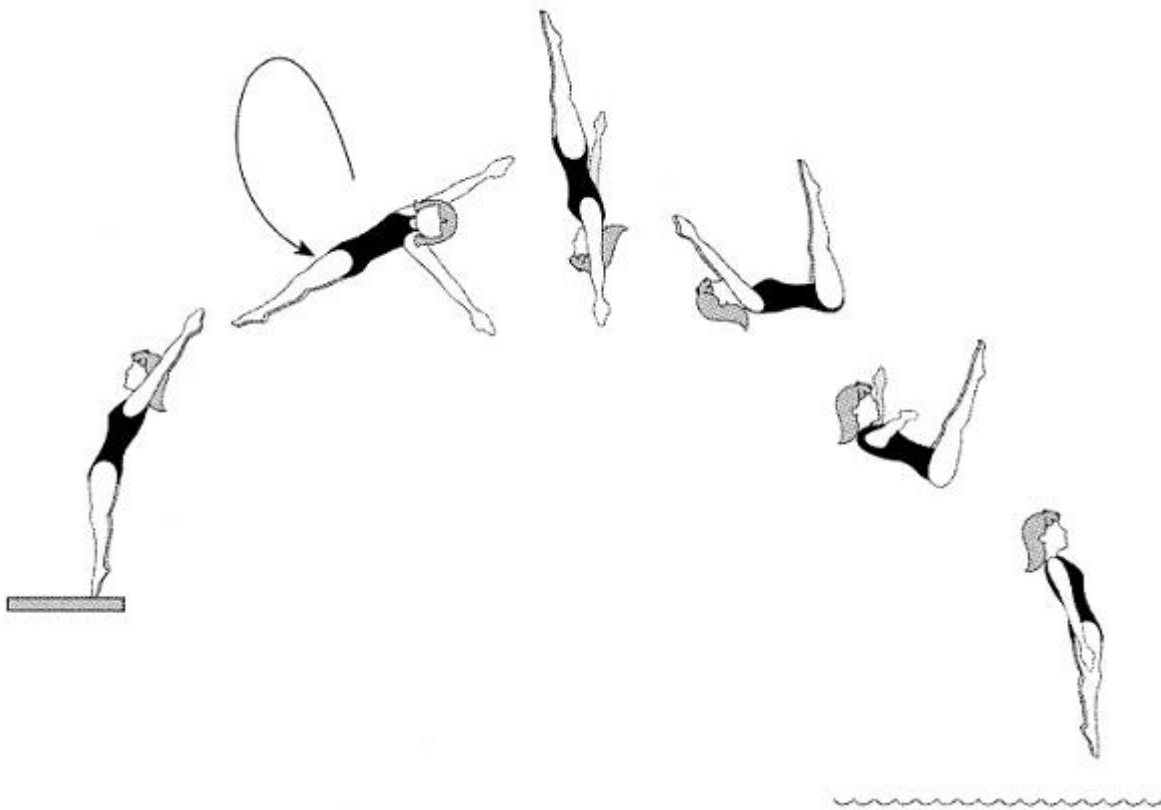
Inward Dives



In this type of dive, the diver should face the water backwards but should rotate in forward direction. While moving away from the board, he has to perform three and a half somersaults. Some of the dives in this group are –

- In pike position, performing inward dive in Open.
- In tuck position, performing one and half somersault inward.
- In pike position, performing two and half somersault inward.
- In tuck position, performing 3 and half somersault.

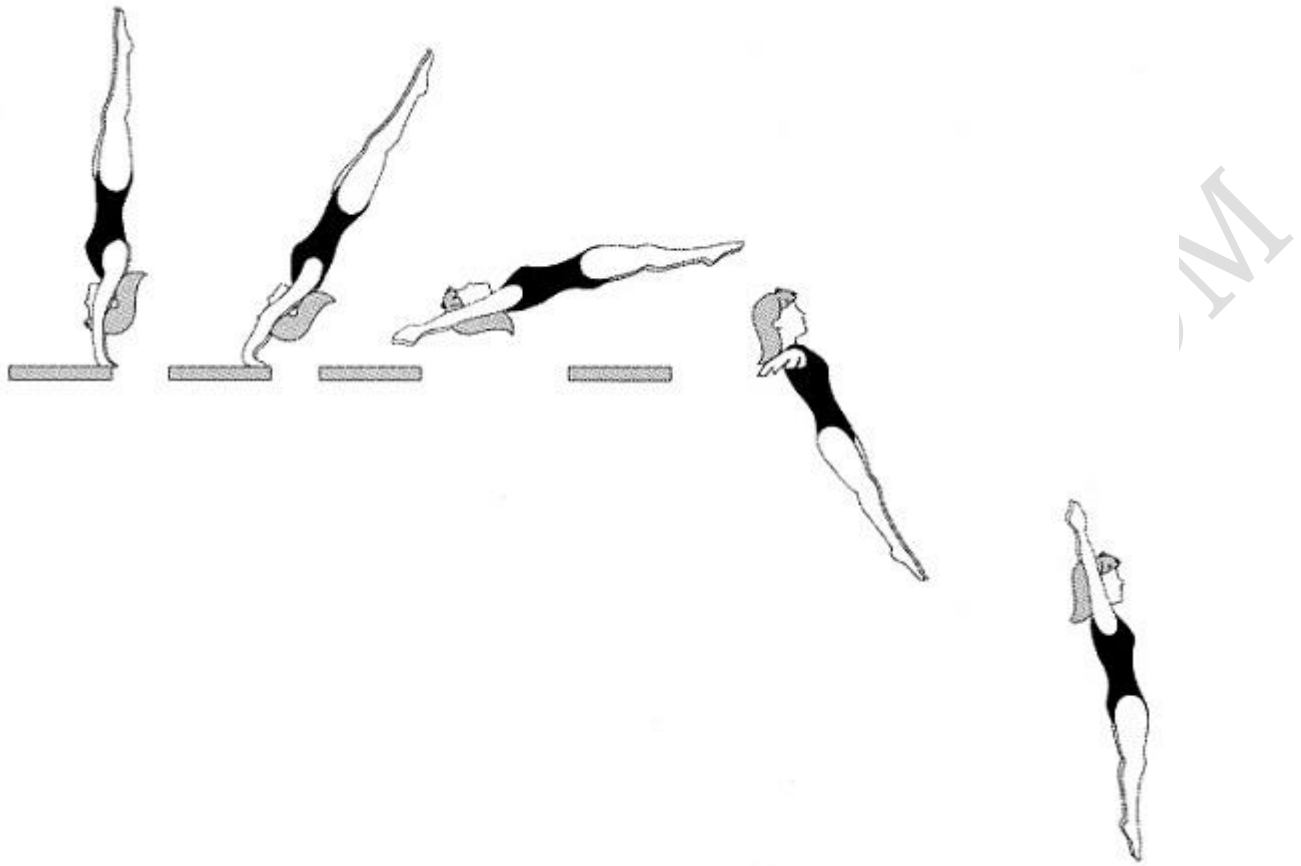
Twisting Dives



If a dive introduces twists in it then it is called as twist dive. This type of dive can be performed in forward, back, inward and in reverse direction. Twisting dives are also performed from an armstand. Example of dives in twisting category are –

- In free position, performing one somersault with one twist.
- In free position, performing one and half back position with one and half twists.
- In the free position, performing one and half reverse somersaults with two and half twists.
- In pike position, performing two and half forward somersaults with a single twist.

Armstand Dives



The level for performing armstand at platform is either 7.5 meters or 5 meters or 10 meters. In this type of dive, handstand can be performed at the edge of the platform in two ways

- By facing forward such that their back faces the water
- By facing backward so that their front faces the water

When both the feet of the diver leaves the ground, the dive is said to begin. Some of the examples of dives from this group are –

- In the pike position, performing two forward armstand somersaults.
- In the tuck position, performing two backward armstand somersaults.
- In the pike position, performing armstand back with two somersaults and half twist.
- In the free position, performing armstand back with two somersaults along with one and half twists.

Diving - Rules

All the rules of diving is governed by FINA (Federation International de Nation). There are different categories of diving. We will discuss various rules pertaining to different categories.

Springboard Diving

All the competitions organised under this category in Olympic Games should be played in 3-meter springboard. Minimum six dives should be completed by men and five by women. You can increase the level of difficulty in this sport as there is no limit for this. There are different types of categories under this such as backward, forward, reverse and twisting. At least one dive should come from each category. Repetition of one dive is allowed for men in the sixth attempt but not in case of women.



Platform Diving

In this type of diving, minimum dives to be performed by men are six and five by women. There is no limit for the degree of difficulty over here. In a list of dives, no category can be repeated. The height of the platform to complete all the dives is 10 meters.

Synchronized Springboard and Platform Diving

In this type of diving, men have to perform six dives while women have to perform five. A degree of difficulty is 2.0 which is assigned for first two dives in both men and women category. However the last three dives for women and last four dives for men have no limit on degree of difficulty. Both men and women need to perform one dive from each of the four categories. Among them, one dive should be made

in forward direction and that too not by standing on the springboard. Among the six dives assigned to men, one dive can be repeated maximum twice.

Diving - Points to Note

The following two points play a crucial part in any type of diving –

- The path of **trajectory** followed for diving
- The effect of **angular momentum**.

This is because in accordance with law of conservation of energy, by changing the body angle with sufficient speed, the total amount of rotation can be varied.

Path of Trajectory



Trajectory is a path on which a diver travels from the springboard to the swimming pool. For safety purpose, it is good to maintain some distance from the diving board.

The athletes are penalized if there is much distance between him and the board. If you want to achieve highest height, then you must show your concern over these –

- A good height should be aimed for because this will fetch you a good score from the judges.
- As the height increases, you get more time to manipulate your body to show some good acrobatic skills.

- If your height of dive is more, then the forward travel distance will be consequently less.

The Effect of Angular Momentum

Diving is a sport of angular momentum which is the product of **rotational velocity** and moment of inertia. **Moment of inertia** depends upon the radius of body flexibility. Now coming to the rotational velocity, it depends upon the compactness of the body directly. That means if the athlete wants to increase his rotational speed, he will compact his body and for reverse he has to make it straight.

Diving - Champions

FINA (Federation International de Nation) is the governing body of Diving. Every participating country has its own governing body to organize the sport successfully throughout the calendar.

Here is a list of some major events held in diving –

- Summer Olympics
- World Aquatics Championship
- Asian Games
- Commonwealth Games
- Arena European
- Continental Conference

Let us now discuss briefly about some of the champions of diving and their career highlights.

Greg Louganis



Greg Louganis is a competitor from United States. He is the only male to win two consecutive diving events in Olympic Games.

In his diving career, he has won 17 gold medals in various sub categories out of which four are in Olympics and five are in World Championships.

He has also won six golds in Pan American Games. Being one of the most proficient athletes, he received James E Sullivan award from the Amateur Athletic Union.

Klaus Dibiasi



Klaus Dibiasi is a diver from Italy who is the winner of three golds in Olympics.

At the starting of his career, he won one silver medal in 1964 Olympics and consecutively won gold medals in Olympics in 1968, 1972, and 1976 from platform.

He also won one silver medal in 1968 Olympics in springboard. Along with this, he has won two golds and two silvers in World Championships and two golds in Summer Universiade.

Fu Mingxia



Fu Mingxia is a diver from China. She has won multiple gold medals in Olympics. With four Olympic golds and one silver, she is one of the best divers China has ever produced.

She became the youngest diving champion of all time when she won the platform-diving world championship in 1991 at the age of 12. She earned a gold at the 1992 Barcelona Games, when she was just 13 years old.

Fu dominated the diving arena throughout the 1990s with her stunning and extremely difficult dives. During the 2000 Olympics, Fu won her fourth gold.

Xiong Ni



Xiong Ni is a diver from China. He won his first medal just at the age of 14 in 1988 Summer Olympics. In his journey in diving till now, he has bagged six gold medals, three silver medals and one bronze medal in various championships.

He won three golds one silver, and one bronze medal in Olympics, one silver in World Championships, and one gold and one silver in Asian Games.

He has also won two golds in Summer Universiade. After winning 3-meter springboard in National Athletic meet in 2001, he announced his retirement.