

A photograph of Rudy Garcia-Tolson swimming in a pool. He is captured in a dynamic, forward-leaning stroke, likely freestyle, with his arms extended and water splashing around him. He is wearing a dark, patterned swimsuit. The pool is divided into lanes by yellow and blue lane lines. The water is a clear blue, and the background shows the pool's edge and lane markers.

Rudy Garcia-Tolson

2008 & 2004 Paralympic Gold Medalist
Current World Record Holder

Rudy Garcia-Tolson

at a glance...

Hometown: Riverside, CA

Resides: US Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, CO

Birth date: 9-14-88

2008 & 2004 Paralympic Gold Medalist – Swimming
World Record Holder – 200 meter IM
10-time American Record Holder
Swimmer, Runner, Ironman

Points of Interest...

- Already a 2-time Paralympic gold medalist in swimming, at the London 2012 Games Rudy will also look to compete in the 200 meter sprint event on the track.
- In 2009, Rudy became the first bilateral, above the knee amputee to complete an Ironman distance triathlon (Arizona).
- Rudy has been featured on Oprah and was named by People Magazine as one of “20 Teens Who Will Change the World”.
- Rudy tours the country as a motivational speaker sharing his message: "A Brave Heart is a Powerful Weapon."



Rudy Garcia-Tolson

in depth...

While Rudy Garcia-Tolson was born with rare, multiple birth defects – a combination of crippling Pterygium Syndrom, a club foot, webbed fingers and a cleft lip and palate - he was also born with an extraordinarily courageous heart and an unbreakable will to endure.

At age five, after 15 corrective operations with limited results, he told his parents he wanted to move on; he would rather be a double amputee than continue to put up with what his life had become. Shortly thereafter he had both legs removed above the knee.

What gradually followed was the blossoming of a world class athletic talent. At eight years old, he told all who would listen that he would swim in the Paralympics. At 10, he became the youngest bilateral amputee to complete a triathlon on his own. The same year, he set his first national record in swimming.

In 2004 he made good on his Paralympic promise, coming home from Athens with a gold medal and a world record. Four years later in Beijing he did the same; another gold medal and another world record.

Seeking an even greater challenge, in 2009 he became the first ever bi-lateral above the knee amputee to complete an Ironman (2.5 mile swim, 110 mile bike, 26.2 mile run).

At the London Paralympics in 2012 Rudy will again look to bring home swimming gold and this time he will look to compete on the track as well, in the 200 meter sprint.

Though only 23, Rudy is already a polished public speaker and regularly shares his inspiring message of, “A Brave Heart is a Powerful Weapon” to groups, corporations and fellow athletes across the country. He has received both the Arte Courage in Sports Award and Nike’s Casey Martin Award, and has helped the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) raise more the \$6 million to help support the athletic dreams of other disabled athletes.

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