

## In Conversation With Himanshu Nandal International Para Swimmer

**Name:** Himanshu Nandal

**Age:** 22

**Date of Birth:** 16-06-2004

**Place of Birth:** Rohtak, Haryana

**Educational Institutes Attended:**

National Association for the Blind, Tagore International School  
Vasant Vihar

**Educational Qualification:**

Graduate, BA Pol. SC Hons

Aatma Sanatan Dharma College (Delhi University)

**Currently Working as:** Student, athlete

**Introduction to Swimming:** Started training in year 2021

**First Coach:** Mr. Ranbir Sharma [SAI]

**Your current coach:** Mr. Ranbir Sharma [SAI]

**Your favorite Indian swimmer (if any & why):** My favorite Indian swimmer is Sajjan Prakash because of his dedication, hard work, and achievements at the international level. He is an inspiration for many young swimmers in India due to his discipline, consistency, and commitment towards the sport.

**Your favorite International swimmer (if any & why):** My favorite international swimmers are Caeleb Dressel, Michael Phelps, and Léon Marchand.

Michael Phelps is considered the greatest swimmer of all time because he holds the record for the highest number of Olympic medals in history. His physical structure and natural ability were perfectly suited for swimming, which made him exceptionally dominant in the sport.

Caeleb Dressel inspires me because of his power, speed, and consistency in sprint events.

Léon Marchand motivates me because of his dedication to the sport, disciplined training, and champion mindset.

**Your main swimming event :** 100M backstroke, 100M Breaststroke and 200 IM

**Turning Point in Life:** Winning 3 golds in Para National Swimming Championship Held in Guwahati, Assam (9-13 Nov, 2022)

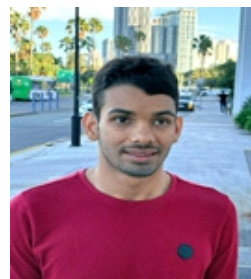
**Most Cherished moment is life:** Winning my first gold and setting national record in my first Para National Swimming Championship in Udaipur, Rajasthan (March 24-27, 2022)

**Major Achievements:**

Owns all national records in Paralympic swimming events under the S11 category.

First Indian blind swimmer to achieve the Minimum Qualification Standard (MQS) in one event and the Minimum Entry Time (MET) in two events for the 2024 Summer Paralympics.

Achieved 7th rank at the World Para Swimming Championships in 2025.



Became a finalist in 4 events at the Para Asian Games 2023, delivering a strong performance at the continental level and marking a significant achievement in my coaching and competitive journey.

**Awarded Arjuna Award/ Major Award/ Recognition in the year**

Awarded Outstanding Player – Swimming (2022–23) by University of Delhi.

Honoured with the Best Sportsman of the Year (2022–23) award by Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College.

Invited as Guest of Honour at the School State Meet held at Step by Step School in 2024, attended along with my coach Ranbir Sharma and my father Balwan Singh.

**I give credit of my success to:**

My entire team of family, My Coaches and My Strength Coach, Nutritionist, Physio.

**What are the challenges (if any) involved in coaching elite swimmers:** Coaching elite swimmers, especially S11 visually impaired swimmers, comes with several unique challenges. Maintaining peak performance consistently, preventing injuries, managing competition pressure, and designing individualized training programs according to each athlete's specific needs are some of the biggest responsibilities of a coach.

In S11 swimming, coaches must also pay special attention to communication, spatial awareness, stroke technique, turns, and race timing. Building trust and confidence between the athlete and coach is extremely important. Along with physical preparation, coaches must focus on the swimmer's mental strength, recovery, motivation, and long-term development to ensure consistent progress and success at the highest level of competition.

**What is your advice to elite swimmers:** My advice to elite swimmers is to stay disciplined, trust the training process, and remain patient during difficult times. Success in swimming does not come overnight; it is achieved through hard work, consistency, determination, and self-belief.

Athletes should never stop learning, improving, and pushing their limits. Every challenge and setback is an opportunity to grow stronger. Staying focused, maintaining a positive mindset, and believing in your abilities are essential for achieving success at the highest level of competition.

**What are the challenges you faced, if any, in training the differently abled swimmers?**

One of the biggest challenges in training differently-abled swimmers, especially S11 visually impaired swimmers, has been overcoming communication barriers and ensuring effective interaction during training sessions and competitions. Coaches must understand the specific needs of each athlete and adapt training methods, technical instructions, and race strategies accordingly.

In S11 swimming, additional attention is required for orientation, turns, tapping techniques, safety, and building confidence in the water. It is important to create an environment where athletes feel supported, motivated, and understood.

However, with determination, proper coaching, family support, patience, and mutual understanding between the athlete and coach, these challenges can be successfully overcome, allowing swimmers to perform at their highest potential.

**How can Indian Swimming Progress:** Improvement in para swimming and sports

development can be achieved by creating accessible infrastructure for all athletes, providing quality training, and offering support schemes for swimmers who cannot afford swim gear or tournament expenses. It is also important to educate and professionally train coaches so they can better understand the needs of athletes with disabilities. Upgrading sports infrastructure, improving awareness, and developing a positive and inclusive mindset among coaches will help create equal opportunities for every athlete to succeed.

**What all has changed for good in Indian swimming since you started swimming:**

People are more aware. Specially in para-swimming, people with disability from different corners of India are encouraged to swim. The streams covering major nationals in India are getting more views, which means people have started taking interest in swimming. National records are being broken more frequently now.

**How are you contributing currently to Indian Swimming:** I try to give as much as I can. By winning gold medals, I am able and encourage people having disability to swim.

**How you see yourself five years from now:** If I receive quality training and proper support, I see myself performing well in major competitions and proudly representing India at the international level. I do not have any specific expectations, but my goal is to always give my best, continue improving, and reach the highest level possible in my sport.

**Message:** Life is full of struggles and challenges, but those who have the courage to face failures and learn from them can become champions and achieve success. Ups and downs are a part of every journey, especially in sports. One should never give up on their goals, no matter how difficult the situation may be. Determination, hard work, and self-belief are the true keys to success.

**MEENAKSHI PAHUJA**

