

Chad le Clos

Olympic Champion | Commonwealth Games' Most Decorated Athlete | Global Swimming Icon

Chad le Clos is one of South Africa's greatest sporting icons and one of the most accomplished swimmers of his generation. An Olympic champion, multiple world champion and record-breaking Commonwealth Games athlete, Chad has competed at the highest level of international swimming for more than 16 years, building a career defined by extraordinary longevity, fierce competitiveness and the ability to perform under immense pressure.

He became a household name at the **London 2012 Olympic Games**, producing one of South Africa's most memorable sporting moments when he defeated swimming legend Michael Phelps in the **200m butterfly final**, touching the wall in **1:52.96** — just 0.05 seconds ahead of Phelps. He added silver in the 100m butterfly in London before winning another two silver medals at **Rio 2016**, in the 200m freestyle and 100m butterfly. His career Olympic tally stands at **four medals: one gold and three silver**.

Chad's success extends far beyond the Olympic Games. He has won **16 world titles across long-course and short-course World Championships**, while his dominance on the international swimming circuit has been equally remarkable. Guinness World Records recognises him as the male swimmer with the **most FINA Swimming World Cup gold medals**, recording **151 victories between 2009 and 2022**. He has also won the overall World Cup series on four occasions — **2011, 2013, 2014 and 2017** — another male record.

In **Glasgow in 2026**, Chad added perhaps one of the most significant milestones of his remarkable career. Competing at his fifth Commonwealth Games at the age of 34, he helped South Africa earn medals in three relay events and took his career Commonwealth Games tally to an unprecedented **21 medals — seven gold, five silver and nine bronze**. His 21st medal, bronze in the men's 4x100m medley relay, moved him past Australian great Emma McKeon and officially made Chad **the most decorated athlete in Commonwealth Games history across all sports**.

What makes Chad's story particularly powerful, however, extends beyond medals and records. His career has demanded extraordinary resilience. He has competed through periods of intense personal adversity, including supporting both of his parents through serious health battles. Then, while making Commonwealth Games history in Glasgow in July 2026, Chad learned that the Cape Town apartment he had called home for more than a decade had been destroyed in a devastating fire. Rather than allowing the tragedy to overshadow his achievement, he responded by turning his attention towards helping others affected by the blaze through his foundation.

These experiences give Chad a story that resonates far beyond swimming. He understands the pressure of expectation, the sacrifices required to remain at the top, the pain of setbacks and the discipline needed to keep moving forward when circumstances become difficult. His journey demonstrates that resilience is not simply about winning — it is about continuing to show up, adapt and pursue excellence despite what life places in your path.

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Now in his mid-thirties, Chad is not treating his remarkable Commonwealth Games record as a farewell achievement. He has made clear his ambition to continue competing towards the **Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games**, which would represent a fifth Olympic appearance and another extraordinary chapter in a career already spanning three decades of elite international competition.

As a speaker and sporting personality, Chad brings together the rare combination of **Olympic success, global recognition, personal adversity, longevity and an unwavering determination to keep chasing ambitious goals**. His story offers audiences — particularly young people, athletes, parents, teams and corporate groups — an authentic perspective on handling pressure, recovering from disappointment, maintaining belief and refusing to allow setbacks to determine the outcome of your journey.

