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Meet Svetlana Kolesnichenko

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When she first went to a synchronised swimming practice, the coach refused to train her. Seventeen years later she is an Olympic Champion and a twelve-time World Champion. She is undoubtedly dominating the synchro-world despite being only 23 years old. And she can't imagine herself to leave this sport anytime soon. Not a good singer, however, she loves to sing. She is Svetlana Kolesnichenko.

When and why did you start synchro swimming?

It all started when I was six years old. My mother said I was fat and it was time to get in shape, get more fit and start moving. In Gatchina, where I'm from, there was a synchro swimming team so my Mom decided to take me there. The coach of the team, Irina Belarusova, refused to train me for the first time, but fortunately, my mother successfully convinced her. And now, here I am.

Who do you give the most credit for your success?

To all the people who believed in me and supported me since my childhood. And to all of my coaches who trained me from the beginnings and later in Moscow. To my relatives, my friends who encouraged me every time despite being far away from me, but I can still feel their support.

Do you have an idol and if so, who is he/she?

Natalia Ischenko and Svetlana Romashina.

What are your favourite sports related and non-sports related memories?

The sweetest memory of my career dates back to when I debuted in the Russian national team in 2010 when I was 16. But I have great memories of every medal, especially these two solo gold medals I have just won.

Outside of sports, I would say my greatest achievement was when I had to move to Moscow from Gatchina. I was 13 at the time and I had started my „adult” life, I had to live apart from my parents and my family. Those were really hard times and I considered quitting synchro swimming but I didn't give up. Now I'm happy I had to go through this process.

Are you superstitious? If yes, what is it?

Yes, I am, but I would like to keep it in secret (laughs).

What is your favourite hobby?

I love to sing, though I'm not a good singer. So, only while driving. When I drive from Moscow to St. Petersburg, which takes for about 10 hours, I always sing. But every time I end up with a sore throat. My dream is to see One Republic live because I haven't been able to attend any of their concerts.

If you weren't a synchro swimmer, what would be your profession?

It is difficult. Sometimes I ask myself the same question. Maybe I would study. I used to be good at mathematics, so something connected to that. But I could never imagine myself doing other things than synchro swimming.

Do you have any plans after retirement?

Years ago I was sure I won't be staying with synchro after finishing my career. But as time passed, I understood that I can't imagine my life without this sport. So I can see my future self as a coach or a team manager.

Who do you share your secrets with?

With my family, my friends and my boyfriend.

Besides you, who do you consider the best synchro swimmer nowadays?

Ona (Carbonell) is really good and I respect her a lot. She is a great professional. But only if I don't count the other Russians.

Are you going to watch any other events here?

I am the only one who hasn't been in the stands so far but I will cheer for our team, the mixed duet and the combination team as well in the upcoming days. But I won't visit the other venues because we have a flight back to Moscow after the synchro events end and I really want to relax during the following weeks. I can't wait to go on vacation.