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Noémi Bártki: „ I have Hungarian blood running through my veins”

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The first half of the 17th FINA World Championships period was over in a blink of an eye, athletes of certain disciplines (divers, for instance) are having their well-deserved rest now. Although Hungarian divers did a great job and managed to demonstrate their skills yet we could not cheer on them in the finals. Or could we?

Noemi Batki (Noémi Bártki) was born in Budapest but as early as at the age of 3 her family moved to Italy. She spent her childhood in a small town called Belluno, what is more, she is still a member of Trieste Tuffi Diving Club operating in Trieste, close to her hometown.

The European champion, Universiade winner diver has been attending major international tournaments on a regular basis since 2005, she has achieved point finishes at Olympics and World Championships.

Here is an interview with Noémi Bártki made on the closing day of the diving tournament in Budapest.

The World Championships are over for you now. How do you feel now that there is no pressure on you anymore?

I was looking forward to coming to Budapest and it definitely was an amazing experience. Although I could not do as well as I had planned, I made some mistakes, yet all in all I enjoyed this past week a lot.

Are you in any ways feeling closer to a venue in Budapest? Do you think the Hungarian audience is aware of the fact that you are related to Hungary and thus can be considered a sort of a Hungarian competitor to cheer on?

Competing in Budapest was awesome, I felt like competing on home soil really. On top of that, apparently the audience knew that the Italian team has a Hungarian member and they cheered on me accordingly. Feeling loved by the audience is great, especially because I left the country at a very early age and has been living in Italy ever since, yet Hungarians fans treated me like a local athlete. I have Hungarian blood running through my veins so seeing the home crowd cheering on me was amazing.

Is there any added value to the venue itself, I mean is Duna Arena a special one? Are there any differences really between venues or it is the springboard and the pool that matters for divers, regardless of other circumstances?

The pool is wonderful. It surely is. Probably the most amazing one I have ever seen. The staff are highly professional, organisers, assistants, volunteers all do an excellent job here. I loved the European Championships venue on Margaret Island back in 2010, also, but in fact it does not compare to the brand new facility.

You have spent all your life in Italy practically. Do you cling to your Hungarian origins?

I was 3 when we moved abroad, but we visited Hungary on a regular basis so I got to know the country quite well. Unfortunately, I have to admit that it is way easier to have a career in sport in Italy, opportunities in the two countries differ significantly. It is not possible to keep contact with Hungarian divers for some reason, I would love to, though. That's the only thing I am rather sad about.

What's next? Are you and your team staying in Hungary to cheer on swimmers and water polo players?

We don't have much time as the Italian Championships take place next week and the whole team will enter. We don't mind it at all, especially because we anticipate a big fuss after our successful performance here. Needless to say, we will follow our swimmers and water polo players from home via TV broadcast.

Speaking about water polo: which team did you cheer on in the Hungary-Italy water polo match?

Me and my mother (who is my coach by the way) were looking forward to the match with great relief considering the fact that in either case we would have been happy with the result. I guess it is my mother and I who benefitted from their 9-9 draw the most in this sense. We were wearing the Italian team uniform sitting in the grandstands among the home crowd, sometimes it was a bit weird having to explain that we are Hungarians really.

What are your long term plans?

First of all, it shall be made clear if the federation continues to plan on me in the future as well. I am halfway out of professional sport, the squad is full of talented youths, they are the future, obviously. I plan to enter the Tokyo Olympics; if everything goes well I would like to enter the duet with my incredibly young 14-year-old partner Chiara Pellacani.