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Natalia Tarasova - Waiting for 'good job'

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She came, she saw, she has been working through strong-minded concepts and... has conquered at least the sympathy and respect of the Hungarian synchronised swimming community. The rest will turn out in the world championships. Certainly, nobody expects victory, but for the members of the Hungarian team the biggest compliment would be, after getting out of the swimming-pool located in City Park, the magical words: Good job!

Natalia Tarasova arrived in Hungary one and a half year ago at the invitation of the Hungarian Synchronised Swimming Association in order to lead the full senior, junior and youth programmes.

'It means a lot to me to be the head coach of the hosting nation of the world championships, it is a great honour. I try to pass on my best knowledge so that the girls could develop to their full potential' said the head coach.

Natalia got involved in synchronised swimming as a young girl and her talent manifested itself early, since she became a Russian champion at the age of 13. Later she repeated this achievement six more times. As a junior she was multiple world and European champion and she was a member of the Russian elite national team for two years. Having retired she did not quit sport, she took a degree in professional coaching and obtained referee qualifications, too.

'I try to pass on my Russian experience in the technical field to the girls. There children learn underwater arm movements from childhood in order to be able to raise themselves up from water because it all comes down to arm movements. Sometimes I also jump into the water and show them what to do under water to make higher movements. Now it works pretty good' informed Natalia about technical details.

'We learn and practice totally different movements' said Dóra Anett Schwartz, a member of the Hungarian team. 'We used to do wider formations, we were farther from each other. Now we are so close that sometimes we are full of blue spots from kicking each other. However, it looks incredibly good when we do the movements so close to each other, there is great harmony, we can count on each other.'

'She takes the work very seriously' Luca Rényi, another team member said about Natalia, 'and although the trainings are very hard and she is very strict, we know that all this work is essential to get good results in the world championships. We love to work with her because

her working style is very different and let's not forget that she was one of the best synchronised swimmers in the world. By the way she is a kind of mother-figure for us. Outside work she is game for everything, we almost forget that she is our head coach. She is totally keen on selfies, beats even us.'

Szofi Kiss, who participated in London 2012, retired from the sport but returned specifically because of Natalia. 'When I learnt that Natalia Tarasova would become the head coach for the national team, I contacted her and returned to the sport. *In addition to pursuing disciplined and focused work she could bring the team together. There is no disunity in the team, we are all friends, we have programmes together, we give a hand to each other and it is a great thing. Coming to training sessions everyone feels like coming to our second family.*'

The Hungarian team is preparing a unique routine for the WCH under the leadership of Natalia. For the head coach it was very important that the routines of solo, duet and team as well would be built on Hungarian traditions, motives, music and movements, since they represent Hungary.

'Creating the routine was a very exciting process, we watched Hungarian folk-dancers and observed their movements. We tried to develop the performance on the basis of Hungarian folk dance traditions. I hope the audience will like the music and the choreography and the girls will do their best' said Natalia.

The team has been practicing together five hours per day for one and a half year. The aim is to perform that 4-minute routine perfectly as intended by the coaching team (Sára Tiringner and Petra Árkovics), Natalia and the girls.

'I love my work' said, almost insisted Natalia. Not that it would be so hard to believe, since her dedication and commitment is second to none. She demands the same attitude from those working with her, too: 'For me concentration is very important. I like to see that girls listen to me when I talk to them and they do the things the way I ask them, or at least they try. I don't like it when they are deconcentrated. But when I see that they straighten up and remember corrections, it means a lot to me. I feel content and it makes me say: good job!'