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Swimming: Hungarian titans preparing for the big meet

2017.07.03. 15:45 CET

A huge bunch of home swimmers will attend the 17th FINA World Championships, yet in this case quality is not affected by high quantity. Even the youngest have had an outstanding season so far thus they will not only learn and improve at the greatest sporting event ever hosted by Hungary but we might as well see some surprising accomplishments. They all have warmed up for the World Champs by claiming (gold) medals at the European Junior Swimming Championships in Netanya.

One of the most promising newcomers at the World Championships could be **Kristóf Milák** aged 17 from Érd, who did an excellent time in 200m butterfly last weekend at the European Junior Swimming Championships in Netanya, in addition he clinched two more gold medals in relays. His coach was also surprised about his outstanding performance, as Attila Selmeçi put it „*it really is adult world class performance*”.

He touched in 1:53.79, junior world record time and second best of this year’s adult world ranking, only 0.08 seconds behind Japanese swimmer Masato Sakai. Neither multiple world champion László Cseh nor Olympic bronze medallist Tamás Kenderesi has had a similar result recently, the latter one touched in 1:54.33 at the international tournament in Rome. The young swimmer from Érd improved his previous best time by one second, by the way this result would have placed him sixth in Rio. No doubt, if he entered this event at the World Championships in Budapest he would definitely make it to the final. However, this time he will enter 100m instead.

„*It would be a miracle if he could get to the 100m butterfly final this summer*” – Attila Selmeçi said in an interview a couple of months ago. We might need to re-schedule this statement for July. The performance of Kristóf Milák is outstanding also because his main tournament – beside the European Junior Championships before the World Champs in July – will be the Junior World Championships in Indianapolis. He, in addition to Nándor Németh and Ajna Késely, has the chance of becoming the first junior world champion of Hungary.

The road of Kristóf Milák to the current run of success was rather bumpy: he was to debut in the field of adults last December at the Short Course World Championships in Windsor, however, due to his heart problem he had to take a break from swimming and he had to start planning from the starting line. Overcoming challenges was rather demanding, mostly

mentally. This April everything got back on track again though; surprisingly enough he touched in 1:55.41, ahead of world class swimmer László Cseh at the nationals in Debrecen.

„I am not really a self-driven type, it is much easier and more motivating when such iconic swimmers stand beside me on the starting blocks as László Cseh, Tamás Kenderesi or Bence Pulai, because I know I have to do my very best if I am to defeat them” – the young talented swimmer told utanpotlassport.hu, who was seven when he claimed his first champion title in Gyula and it was clear already by then that he was absolutely talented and had great potential for swimming.

His coach told that a few years ago he did well in backstroke, then he took up butterfly and although he was quite good at freestyle and breaststroke it became clear that butterfly would be his main scope. He still focuses on freestyle, as well, since he is a member of the 4x200m freestyle relay.

The 17-year-old boy reminds his coach of Michael Phelps, based on his physical fitness Kristóf may prove to be successful in 200m as well as in 100m, provided he further improves his breathing technique he has bright future prospects.

„Kristóf has excellent genetics, he is tall, his arms and legs are long, his specific gravity is ideal, what is more, his dolphin legs are the kind one must be born with. His physical fitness and endurance is great, too. I am not into guessing but if he keeps improving at the same pace he might become an outstanding swimmer even in the field of highly successful swimmers in Hungary. He is a great talent, for sure” – told Attila Selmei.

At the nationals held in Debrecen this April he swept 100m butterfly with the seventh best time of adult world ranking (51.98) securing his entry to the World Championships in Budapest this summer. Later, at the Budapest Open he had the opportunity to try the pool of Duna Arena.

„I really enjoyed swimming here, the arena is huge, spacious and amazing. I can't believe I will be standing on the starting block here this July. I always focus on my tasks ahead therefore I don't like making predictions about the future, I will do my best for sure. I will race in the European Junior Championships, then the Junior World Champs and I will perform as good as I can” – said Kristóf Milák.

Talking about boys we must not forget to mention the performance and significance of 17-year-old **Nándor Németh**. The boy from Eger became Hungarian champion at the nationals in April touching in 48.64 (new Hungarian record, 10th best time of the world ranking at the time) in 100m freestyle. It definitely caused headache to head coach Csaba Sós, but after consulting Zsolt Plagányi, coach of Nándor, he decided the boy's main tournament would be the World Championships in Indianapolis.

No surprise he clinched a gold at the European Junior Championships in Netanya, too. In Budapest this July he will be a member of the 4x100m freestyle relay, he will have the opportunity to make his mark there. Fellow swimmers, studying in the States, Richárd Bohus and Péter Holoda as well as five-time European Championships bronze medallist

freestyler of MTK, Kozma Dominik may be of assistance.

The tall young boy took up swimming because of his brother. Although he did football for a while in the end he chose swimming. He was preparing in a two-lane pool of a hotel in Siófok for a long time, but about five years ago his family made an important decision. Nándi and his mother first moved to Érd then Törökbálint in order for the boy to attend the trainings of Zsolt Plagányi, while the other part of the family remained home.

Getting used to the new situation was rather hard for him, he travelled back to Siófok whenever he could. His coach allowed him to skip Saturday trainings and spend time with his family instead. Cooperation, family support and harmony between the coach and the family soon proved to be fruitful as Nándi finished first in 100m freestyle and 4x200 freestyle relay at the European Junior Championships in Hódmezővásárhely, and so far he has claimed 3 gold medals at the European Junior Swimming Championships being hosted by Netanya at present.

„Maybe life returns some of what he has given up for swimming” - told Zsolt Plagányi to utanpotlassport.hu earlier.

The master coach of the Swimming Club of Eger was earlier thinking about the direction to take with Nándor Németh, hesitating between 100m and 1500m freestyle. Then through tournaments and results it became clear that his main event would be 100m freestyle beside relay events. He will carry no burdens at the World Champs in Budapest, he may express his gratitude to his family, club and master for all the sacrifices by a pleasure swim.

Probably the list should have been started by **Ajna Késely** because of her steady performance so far: the gold medal claimed by the athlete and greatest talent of Kőbánya SC at the Junior Championships in Israel is already her fifth one. She excelled again in 200, 400, 800 and 1500m in the European junior tournament and won a gold with the medley relay team, as well.

„Real treasure” - as her master, György Turi described her. Her tally consists of more than 400 medals already, although she hasn't yet turned 16. Her icon is one of the best Hungarian swimmers ever, five-time Olympic champion Krisztina Egerszegi. The mascot she got from her is still in her bag, she doesn't mind being compared to the legendary swimmer sometimes, what is more, she often asks the swimming legend for advice.

Aged 15 she claimed her first European champion title in the adults' field as a member of the 4x200m relay last year in London, while she was the youngest swimmer in the Hungarian team in Rio. The 17th FINA World Championships hosted by Budapest motivates her a lot, she strives to swim personal best. The teenage girl always all smiles loves swimming, it would be no surprise if she was one of the biggest favourites of the home crowd this summer thanks to her charming character and outstanding performance.

At her first World Championships she will definitely enter 1500m freestyle and women's 4x200m freestyle relay, while her entry to 200, 400 and 800m freestyle highly depends on Katinka Hosszú. World class swimmer will announce which events she picks for the World Champs by 5 July, this determines the 15-year-old girl's roles in Duna Arena.

„I am glad about having the opportunity to swim with Katinka Hosszú and Boglárka Kapás, because I might copy some technical tricks of theirs which may come handy in the long run for me, too. I hope for great accomplishments at the World Championships in Budapest if the opportunity presents itself” - he said, adding that the same applies to the Junior World Championships in Indianapolis.

[The video and article about her published earlier are available here.](#)