



THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED ATHLETES IS MORE THAN I HAVE EXPECTED, RUSSIAN SWIMMING TEAM'S INTERIM HEAD COACH SAYS

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SPORT

Interim head coach of the Russian national swimming team, Sergey Kolmogorov, summed up the results of Russian athletes' performance at the Russian Short Course Swimming Championships in Kazan and revealed some aspects of preparation for the upcoming Europeans.

– Has the roster been confirmed?

– Yes. We have 38 swimmers that have been selected in accordance with the rules and regulations. The rules and regulations have been carefully elaborated by the federation presidium and unanimously approved. It's true, unfortunately we don't have qualified athletes in some events. But 38 swimmers are more than I have expected. I thought that we will have about 35, no more.

– What are your thoughts about athletes' performance at the nationals?

– For reporters, the championships are just a news opportunity whereas for us, coaches, it's the moment of truth when our strengths and weaknesses are revealed. The results were quite predictable; the efficiency of performing takeoffs and flip turns has finally increased. Alexander Kochergin, head of the complex research team, has made a kinematic analysis of a competition process. We've received all the data, and they are close to the estimated model properties. Everything goes in accordance with athletes' individual training programmes. For instance, despite the fact that Chimrova set a national record and qualified for the Europeans, she will return to Moscow and continue her preparation. In my opinion, it's the right thing to do, and it gives me confidence that she will meet the qualifying standard in April and will also show a good result at the Olympic Games.

– Nikita Konovalov and Oleg Kostin earned several gold medals at once; what will you say about their progress?

– I'm pleased with their results. I've checked the FINA point table: Kostin's 200m breaststroke time leaves other swimmers' results behind. It's quite impressive: more than 900 points, it's a very decent result. But what place Kostin will eventually take in the FINA point table will depend on how well other opponents will perform.

– Can you reveal the national team's preparation programme for the European championships?

– From November 18 to 29, we will have a training camp at Lake Krugloe. We have a number of aspects that need to be addressed. First of all, we are going to practice six short 50m relays. The time an athlete spends on starting out of a block is crucial as the efficiency of the relay's switchover depends on it. All athletes have different reaction times: it can take them 0.30 or 0.10 seconds to start out. And we train these takeoffs: our swimmers gather and practice them. The second aspect related to the extensive medical examination that part of athletes need to undergo during the training camp. The third aspect is about gear. The fourth aspect, I think, involves a single or double doping control that our athletes need to undergo. Our team will not compete at any tournaments until we are convinced that our swimmers are 100% clean.

– Have you set any minimum and maximum goals for the national team?

– No, I have not. I deliberately asked coaches and athletes not to intensify their preparation during the big winter training cycle. Most of them followed my recommendations. Although, I haven't set any target plan for anyone. But I think you understand that after altitude training most swimmers' results are about to improve.

– What competitive conditions will be created for the European championships in Israel?

– The championships will be held on December 2-6. The tournament will take place at the Institute of Physical Culture, a new competition venue with two swimming pools. We will be staying not far from the

venue, in a hotel near the Mediterranean Sea.

– What can you say about junior athletes who set so many records at the tournament?

– I'm very happy that our aspiring boys and girls have started making progress and living up to my expectations. I hope that sooner or later they will emerge as international class athletes.

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