

Focus on latest athletes to join FINA Scholarship programme

FINA Communication Department

Six new young talents from and Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Namibia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Zambia, joined the FINA Scholarship programme between April and May this year, as preparations for the [17th FINA World Championships](#) [1] intensifies.

All six promising swimmers joined the sport complex Spire Institute in Geneva (USA) with one common objective dear to their heart: qualify with a B-standard time for the 17th FINA World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, this summer.

As FINA tries to get to know them better, we wanted to focus on their individual inspiring experience at the Institute.



FINA asked the youngsters three general questions regarding their daily training life and goals for the future:

1. What has changed in your daily training since you have joined the FINA Scholarships Programme at Spire Institute?
2. How do you evaluate your progress and improvement?
3. What are your goals for the FINA World Championships?

While most of the swimmers share a common impression that training at the Spire Institute is a lot more intense and specialised than at home and that their technique is improving, they have all grown in confidence

and mental strength and overall accomplish better performance in the pool.



Personal answers are detailed below

Tilka Paljk, Zambia (18.02.1997)

The changes in my daily training have been the amount of intensity and work I put into each session. With each session, I have grown in knowledge and learned how to better myself in every possible way. I have learned more from my coaches here at Spire than I ever have before and most of it can be applied to my daily life and not just my sport.

I evaluate my progress personally by recording photographic evidence every 2 weeks to see the difference in my body. So far I have noticed that I've become more lean and muscular but I still have a lot of work to do.

I Also evaluate myself via test sets that we swim in the pool such as the 4x100 on 6min that we do once or twice a month.

My goal for the World Champs is to swim a B-standard time for my 50 breaststroke. I believe that I have the power to do it with the amount of work I'm putting in and the correct state of mind that I have during practices. I am focused on this one goal and I believe it will be achieved soon.

Sultan Bukeev, Kyrgyztan (31.05.1997)

The main change here is that the practice is harder. I have learned so much new stuff for me. I think my stamina has grown so much and I corrected my technic in breaststroke My goal in Budapest is to show the best results possible in my stroke.

Nicole Rautemberg, Paraguay (01.08.1999)

At Spire we focus more on the technique and more speed aspects of competition than endurance. I've learnt a new approach to training and different ways to pace myself in training. It really pushes me mentally. I feel like I am getting stronger mentally and physically. although i am yet to show an improvement in my times I have faith I'll improve with when I taper leading up to World Championships, because so far the training

load has been very intense. My ultimate goal is to improve my times.

Martina Valiente, Uruguay (25.12.2000)

I have more training sessions per week, we swim more meters. My underwater kick is better and my starts too.

Phillip DeNobrega, Guyana (10.08.1999)

Since I have joined the FINA Scholarships programme at the Spire Institute, my daily training is exactly what I imagined it to be at such an impressive institute. The actual training 3 times a day is definitely one major change from what I was doing in Guyana. Not only physical training but mental as well.

I have definitely over come many weaknesses and challenges over the past 4 months and gained incredible friendships. The training is definitely more specialised and specific to exactly what my body needs to perform; I have seen an overall physical change and it shows in the pool.

Evaluating my progress and improvement, I have a lot more to work on but I can proudly say that I have improved in all aspects of swimming; I have grown more confident in myself and my passion for swimming. I know to myself I have developed more strength, endurance, stamina and over all better performance in the pool.

My goals for FINA World Championships would be to improve in my times and to make a good placement, also to make my coaches, family and my country proud.

Xander Skinner, Namibia (31.05.1997)

Back home I did 5-7 swim sessions a week. At Spire we do 9 swim sessions a week. Gym wise I did 2 sessions a week. At Spire we do 3 gym sessions and 2 recovery sessions.

The quality of training at Spire is a lot better than back home. Back home we usually trained with 9 other people in a lane and at Spire we usually have a lane to ourselves. Smaller groups mean you get more attention from the coaches.

At Spire no one is slow. It is constant racing against fellow team mates that turned into family. The 'vibe' in the pool is a lot better than back home. That comment is not a direct answer to the question but to have a good training environment is really important.

Results speak for themselves. Not only can I see improvement in my best times but I also see improvement in my training times. I am getting a lot stronger physically and mentally. I would never have seen this improvement back home. I have managed to overcome my fear of racing here at Spire and fell in love with the sport. I see that as improvement as well. Physically I feel better. My body took a while to adapt to the new environment. But after that period of time I have just seen improvement.

My biggest goal for World Champs is to be the first Namibian swimmer to go under 50 seconds for the 100m freestyle. But other than that I want to improve my times at the meet. I also want to make my coach Thad, proud of me and proud of his work.
