

YOG BA 2018: Gorbenko, a golden milestone for Israel

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At just 15, Anastasia Gorbenko gave to Israel its first international swimming title at this level. At the elite Olympic Games or at the FINA World Championships, the country has no medals so far, while two athletes have shone at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m). This was even before Anastasia was born: in 2000, in Athens (GRE), Michael Halika got the bronze in the men's 400m IM, while two years later, in Moscow (RUS), Vered Borochovski was also third in the women's 50m fly.



In 2010, in the inaugural edition of the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, Yakov Toumarkin was in evidence, collecting two silver, in the men's 100m and 200m back. Toumarkin then amassed a handful of medals at the European Championships (in 50m and 25m-pool). Despite these notorious successes, gold never came for Israel.

This is now over, since the final of the women's 200m individual medley, in the inaugural day of the YOG taking place in Buenos Aires (ARG). Gorbenko successfully improved her qualifying time of 2:13.88 and touched the wall in 2:12.88 – her splits were 29.31 (after butterfly), 1:03.43 (after backstroke), and 1:41.49 (after breaststroke). Fourth at half of the race, the breaststroke and freestyle legs were decisive for the final outcome.



Born on August 7, 2003 Anastasia Gorbenko performs a very eclectic programme in Buenos Aires, competing also in the 100m free, 200m breast, 200m back, and the mixed 4x100m free relay. In the latter, the Israeli team was not successful and was disqualified after the final, some minutes after her historical gold medal.

This Monday, on the second day of the competition, she finished 8th (56.33) in the heats of the 100m free, also improving her qualifying time of 56.51. In the afternoon, in the semi-finals of the event, she swam faster (56.21) and managed to qualify, also in eighth, for the decisive race of the event.

In the mixed zone after competing, Gorbenko was a happy swimmer. Asked about the celebration after an historic gold medal for her country, she admitted: “It was a very special moment. We are all very proud. I know how much it represents for Israel. Now, the party is over and I need to swim my events”. About the remaining days in Buenos Aires, Israeli’s new hero is clear: “I hope to do my best times in all the races. That’s why I’ll be totally happy at the very end of the competition”.

After the Argentinean experience, she naturally expects to qualify for the 2019 FINA World Championships in Gwangju (KOR) and of course for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. “Still difficult to know if I’ll make it, but I am fully motivated to achieve it”, considered Gorbenko. Choosing so many events, she confesses that “medley races are nice”, but that she “slightly” prefers breaststroke.

