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5 questions to YOG ambassador Chad Le Clos (RSA)

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South Africa's Olympic champion Chad Le Clos is in Nanjing today, August 20, to fulfill his role as Youth Olympic Games ambassador. On the eve of flying to Doha for the inaugural FINA/MASTBANK Swimming World Cup leg on August 27, the 22-year-old swimming sensation and coach Graham Hill boosted the spirit of a dozen young swimmers with a masterclass at the competition pool, sharing training and racing tips. For 30 minutes, gleaming eyes and broad smiles could be seen on the young swimmers' faces; it is a day many will have long-lasting memories of.

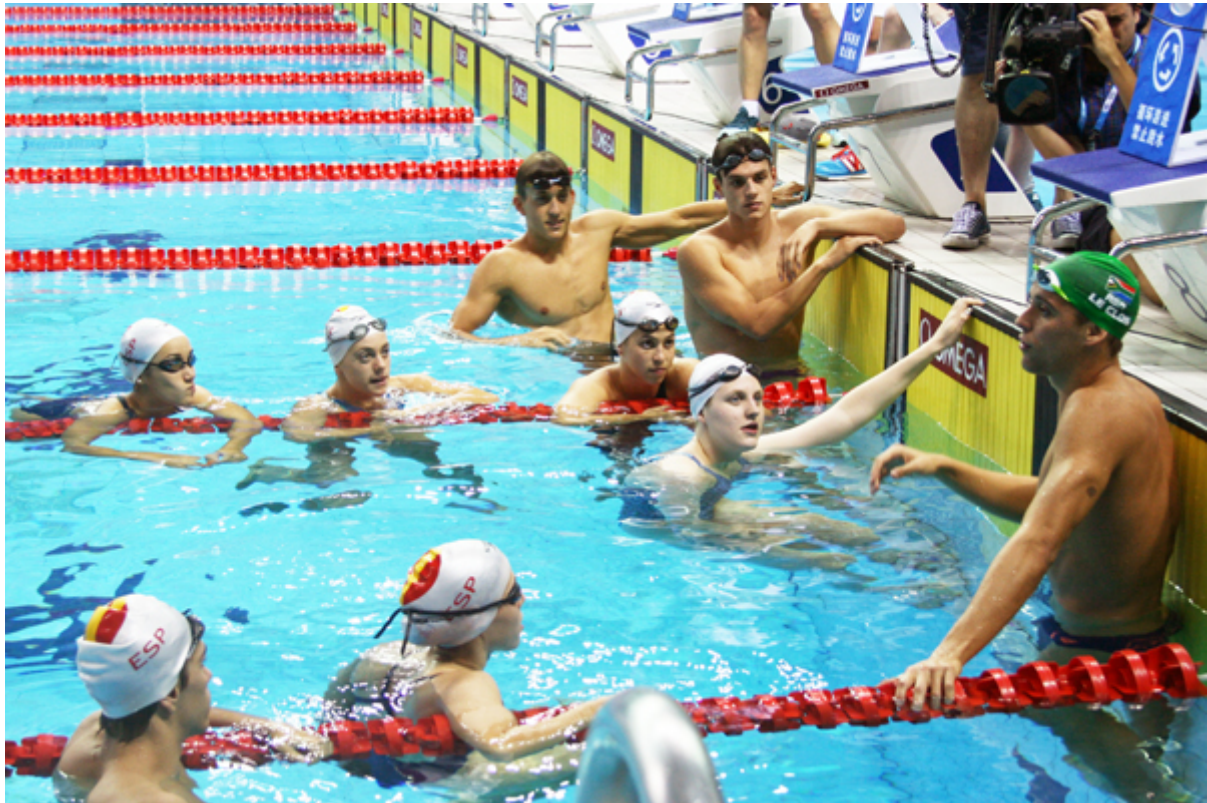
What does it mean to you to be YOG Ambassador here in Nanjing?

It's a huge honour for me, my family and my country. You think about how much has happened in the last couple of years, we've come such a long way, especially for a South African boy. I'm just really proud.

Four years ago, you were stepping up at the inaugural YOG edition in Singapore, claiming one gold (200m IM),

here as an Olympic champion (in the 200m butterfly) inspiring the youth. How does it feel?

Crazy, that's really the word to use. I still remember seeing that YOG sign everywhere I went. Unfortunately I got three silvers four years ago. I was really expecting I could get more gold medals but I got only one. I never won the 200m butterfly at the Youth Olympics. So I went from a silver medal at the Youth Olympics to winning gold at the Olympics, in two years.



Chad Le Clos took the time to give a precious Masterclass to several YOG swimmers - *credit: Delphine Schmutz/FINA*

Michael Phelps, the winningest athlete in Olympic history, will race this week at the Pan Pacific championships in

Gold Coast, Australia. Do you wish you could be there [Le Clos hasn't raced Phelps since London 2012]?

Yes, I wish I could be there. Phelps is probably going to go a 50. in the 100m butterfly. He's already taken the number-1 time in the world this year [in the heats at U.S. nationals on August 8]. When we race each other next year in Kazan [at the FINA World Championships], we'll see what happens. You can swim the fastest times in the world anywhere you like but we have to race each other, that's when it's going to count.

"I can't wait to race Michael [Phelps]. It's good for the sport, it's good for me," Le Clos added.

We're halfway in the Olympic cycle, where are you at in your preparation for Kazan 2015 and eventually, Rio 2016?

For me now it's all about the Swimming World Cup and the World short-course Championships in Doha at the end of the year. We then are going to do a big chunk of work from January until March-April before our trials. And then it will be about getting me fit again. I need a lot more fitness now, I've done a lot of racing in the last two years.

You're leaving to Doha tomorrow, are you planning to add a third Swimming World Cup title to your collection?

We'll see [laughs], I'm excited. I'd like to win a third title. I'll see how I do in the first two stops [Doha and Dubai], maybe get a world record, if I'm winning along the way it would be nice to extend my lead at the top.

"At the Doha World short-course, I'm going to try to be the first guy to win a triple [in the 100m and 200m butterfly], like I did this year at the Commonwealth Games and last year at the World Championships," Le Clos said.
