



January 5, 2012

## Newsletter

### A Matter of Time (and Effort)



Swimming is all about time: How quickly an athlete can accomplish a task (namely, swim a length of a certain discipline). Time is elusive...either we're chasing it or running out of it.

Parents: We need your help when it comes to time. Please make sure to bring your children to the pool about 10 minutes prior to the scheduled practice time. First of all, the coaching staff is not capable of, and is not responsible for, watching children prior to practice. We have a large team and the likelihood of a child getting hurt is much higher if large numbers of kids are running around the pool unsupervised. And the reality is that the coaching staff *cannot* supervise athletes prior to scheduled practice times.

We also ask that you pick up your children immediately following the end of a scheduled practice. Again, the coaching staff is not capable of, nor are we responsible for, watching children following the conclusion of a scheduled practice.

We know it is difficult to coordinate families but your help in this matter is vital to allowing the Bolles School Sharks to continue to offer a safe, educational atmosphere in which your children can grow.

### Welcome Ariana!



World record holder and World Championships gold medalist Ariana Kukors will prepare for her run at the London Olympics right here at the Bolles School Sharks!

Kukors has just arrived in Jacksonville and will be training under the tutelage of Coach Sergio Lopez.

In 2009, Kukors shattered the world record in the 200-Meter Individually Medley when she took home the World Championships gold medal with a time of 2:06.15. Before that meet the world record had been 2:08.45!

Kukors narrowly missed making the 2008 Olympic team when she finished third in the 200 I.M. She is ranked #3 in the world this year.

This is the first time the Bolles Sharks have had a world record holder training at our pool since former Bolles swimmer and Bolles coach Martin Zubero trained here back in the mid-1990s.

So let's make Ariana feel welcomed. Say hello when you see her around the pool!

### Worth Watching

The Bolles School Sharks not only won the 2011 Short Course Junior Nationals Team Championship, the Bolles boys broke every single relay record at the meet, posting many of the fastest relay times ever swum by a non-collegiate team! It is hard to know which event we should recommend that you watch, so how about three of the relays (that's all I can find!)? Check them out!

200 Medley Relay <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzCyKBZNSQ0&feature=related>

400 Medley Relay <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Y13iWpum4&feature=related>

400 Free Relay <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-e-eauilM&feature=related>



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### A Journey to Russia



#### My Ticket In Russia

I didn't appreciate just how **big** Russia truly is until I boarded a 9-hour flight from Moscow to Vladivostok. 9 hours! That is how long it took me to fly from New York City to Moscow, only this time I flew over only one country. So when the coaches in Vladivostok told me they felt cut off from the rest of the world I could understand what they meant. They live on the edge of Russia and register barely a blip on the radar of Russia Swimming. It is another world.



#### View in Vladivostok



#### Vladivostok Pool

I was invited to Russia by the Far Eastern Russian Swimming Federation, but the invitation truly came from the father of Olga Lapteva, a swimmer who spent 7 weeks at our camp this past summer. When Olga arrived she said she swam the 1500 freestyle and 400 I.M. When she left she turned out to be one of the fastest 200 Breaststrokers her age in all of Russia. Her success yielded this rare invitation and an opportunity for me to experience a different culture both in the pool and beyond.

The pool where Olga swims was built for the 1988 Russian Olympic team. Vladivostok is very close to South Korea (and even closer to North Korea!), so the Russian team spent weeks training there back in '88 prior to travelling to Seoul. It is not a bad pool but it is showing its age. The lane lines are so loose they seem to breathe as swimmers pick up speed. They can only be tightened so much because, unlike our pool, the actual lines are made of rope instead of cable. Whereas we use a wrench to easily tighten the cable, they pass a stick through a loop in the rope and literally pull as hard as possible to try and get the rope tight. But it doesn't work.

This pool is the only pool in all of Vladivostok in which "sportsmen" (that's how they refer to athletes) can train. Another 50-Meter pool at the Navy College used to be available but it is literally falling apart; a pool at a local gym is closed to sportsmen; another pool is open to sportsmen but to discourage teams from using it the pool is only 24-meters long. So on any given day up to five different teams are sharing an 8-lane long course pool. Many of the teams have swimmers as young as 10 and as old as 17, all sharing the same lane, all finding a way to do a practice that benefits everyone.

It is a challenging situation.

The Vladivostok pool is nothing like the competition pool in Kazan where Olga and a teammate competed in Russia's version of Junior Nationals. This is a beautiful 50-meter pool at the Volga Region State Academy of Physical Culture Sport and Tourism. Kazan is known as Russia's Sports City. It will host the World University Games in 2013 and the FINA World Championships in 2015 (though they are building a new aquatic complex for that meet).







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**Kazan Competition**

While swim meets the world over are all similar, some things are strikingly different. First of all, there is no controlled warm-up. That means that hundreds of athletes were not only warming up in the competition course, they were also doing starts at both ends of the pool while dozens of swimmers were running each other over in the lanes. I nearly had a heart attack! There is no such thing as a one-way sprint lane. Athletes just pick a hole between swimmers and dive, while I prayed for the best. Amazingly, no collisions!

There was very little cheering during the meet. And coaches who do cheer often use whistles instead of whistling. But few made any noise at all. Perhaps there is very little cheering because while each heat swims, during both prelims and finals, there is music blaring over loud speakers. And I mean blaring! Not only did they play music, but it was American music, most of it rap, and none of it bleeped out or edited. I suppose very few people in the building could understand what the words were, but I cringed at the notion of young kids hearing this music in an environment like a swim meet!



**The Bolshoi**

My final stop in Russia was in Moscow, where I spent one of the most memorable days of my life thanks to Andreas Goerzen, father of Bolles boarder Alex Goerzen. Mr. Goerzen picked me up at my hotel in the morning and we ventured into Moscow proper, where he had arranged a personal tour guide to show us all of the historic sites like Red Square, the site of the 1980 Olympics, Stalin's 7 skyscrapers, the Lubyanka prison, the GUM, and more. We ate at one of Moscow's best steak houses and then visited the newly renovated Bolshoi Theater for a Christmas Eve showing of the Nutcracker.

There is much more about the trip I could talk about: The amazing food; the weather; crazy Russian drivers – to name a few. But right now it is good to be home, back with my family and our team. I hope that I helped open some doors for both the Russian swimmers and our own Bolles athletes. I have a feeling that this trip will not be the last of our team's association with Far Eastern Russian Swimming!



**Kazan by Night**



**Red Square**