



## KALUGA OBLAST SWIMMER NIKOLAY SKVORTSOV: A STRONG OPPONENT ONLY MAKES YOU STRONGER

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SPORT



Nikolay Skvortsov of the Kaluga Oblast managed to win the men's 200m butterfly final and meet the qualifying time standard for the upcoming European Short Course Swimming Championships.

Skvortsov is an experienced swimmer: he's a member of the Russian national swimming team, European short course champion, multiple world and European medallist, holder of the world record in the 200 butterfly event.

– What does it feel like to be Russia's fastest swimmer in the 200m butterfly?

*– I feel more confident now. For a long time – for a year and a half – I have been failing to grasp the title in this event and now I have confidence that I will be able to qualify even for the Olympics. While competing at the World Cup legs, I had a chance to talk with Irina Vyatchanina and Igor Omelchenko who coach abroad. I'm 31 years old, and I still learned quite a lot of new things from them. The training methods are changing, and even coaches change their workstyle. It's inevitable because the results are being improved every day. Coaches need to enhance the quality of their work in order to stay on the national team. I usually plan my programme all by myself; my coach just helps me to improve my technique and corrects my training programme if needed.*

– Did everything work out in the race?

*– No. If it has been long course, I would have had problems. But I will work on it.*

– You flew a lot due to the World Cup legs. Did it affect much your performance?

*– Surprisingly enough, I overcame jet legs quite easily but had a hard time with my races. I felt more confident and stronger with each race. Due to my participation at these legs, I approached the national championships in near perfect shape. I like gearing up through competing at tournaments – unlike training sessions, you can go all out here. Besides, no one has to make you angry on purpose, you anger in a natural way while you compete.*

– Will you maintain the same training method in the build-up to the Olympic Games?

*– I will not be able to do that for so many competitions but I will do it for some local events. The most important competition for me for now is the upcoming Russian Championships in April. It's a starting point. As for the things after it – there is no point in making predictions.*

– Have you been preparing for the national championships?

*– I've been preparing; I asked them to send me to the World Cup legs because I wanted to feel the long-forgotten heat of the struggle again. I usually swam in the same races with Chad le Clos. When you compete along a champion, you become a little bit stronger – I know the feeling. When you compete with some younger swimmers at some local competitions – their skills level goes up soon after it, too. It's like in chess: you become stronger when you play against a stronger opponent.*

– Who are your role models?

*– There are quite a few of them, among them swimming legend, Phelps. But I usually admire not the people but the qualities they have – it's their qualities that make them champions, not their names.*

– Do you have such qualities?

*– I hope that I have the ability to learn. I do my best to keep it up and to constantly learn something new.*



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