

2011 13-15 National Team

Full-time training began in Walnut Creek on June 13, 2011, just four weeks after the National Team Trials in Santa Clara and just six weeks before the Mediterranean Cup in Milan, Italy. The 11 athletes on the team were thrilled to be there; they had all worked exceedingly hard over the last few weeks, months, and years hoping to someday make it onto a National Team. Coach Tammy McGregor, Coach Yuka Yeh, Coach Gail Emery, and manager Janet Redwine were all there on the first day of practice to give the swimmers a preview of the summer, to test their skills, and to get right to work perfecting routines for the summer. Only two of the team's 11 athletes had ever been on a National Team before, and only three had ever been to the Mediterranean Cup (formerly known as the Comen Cup) before. In short, they had a lot of work ahead of them to prepare for this competition.

Over the next six weeks, the 13-15 Team was hard at work both in and out of the water. At the pool, Tammy, Yuka, and Gail were joined by top figure coaches Heather Olsen, Young-Shin Woo, Gail Pucci, Chris Carver, Patti Andresen, Mary Butwinick, Heather Tiernan, Kendra Zanotto, and Janet Redwine to help the girls improve their figures. Figure sessions included drills, weights, and of course lots of figure "all the way throughs". The number of coaches and consultants really helped each swimmer improve individually by getting the exact kind of training they needed.

At the same time, the team was working hard on their team and combo routines, aided by top routine coaches Stephan Miermont, Kim Probst, Chris Carver, Patti Andresen, and Heather Carrasco. Tammy, Yuka, and Gail were a great source of motivation for the girls, encouraging them to push through the difficult times in order to enjoy the rewards of competition.



In addition to her regular coaches, soloist Rachel Hyon was fortunate to work with some of the best solo coaches in the U.S.: Kim Probst, Patti Andresen, and Heather Carrasco to improve her presentation and endurance.

The duet of Karina Boyle and Sandra Ortellado also worked diligently to increase speed and improve synchronization in their duet every day. They also benefitted from visitors such as Stephan Miermont and Chris Carver.



Out of the water, the group started work right away with a rhythmic gymnastics coach, Lucy Usarova, to improve their flexibility. Trainer Thomas Oshimo stopped by every week to consult on any aches and pains. Sports Psychologist Annie Franzia helped the athletes to improve their mental approach to competition by talking through some of the pressures and stresses they would feel in Italy. Two circus school teachers, Teacher Xia and Teacher Luyi, came every week to help the athletes improve their lifts by working on the lifts out of the water and by



working on strength training. Teacher Luyi even set up a date for the athletes to join him at Trapeze Arts, a gym in Oakland. Little did they know that in addition to their normal lift work, the swimmers would also have a chance to swing from the trapeze!



As they neared the end of their training in July, the 13-15 Team participated in a few exhibitions to help prepare them for competition. They performed in Walnut Creek on July 4, at the "Week in the Creek" synchro summer camp on July 29, and had their final exhibition the day before they left for Milan on Saturday, July 30. Family, friends, and consultants were all there to witness the vast improvement of the team! Training had come to an end, and now the real fun was about to start.



The team arrived after a long day of travel and got right to work the next Monday. Luckily, they were able to practice in the competition pool for the three days before the competition began. This helped give them a sense of what their actual swims would feel like, and it even tested their nerves as other countries stopped by to watch.

On Tuesday, the whole group of athletes, coaches, the manager, and judge took a short venture into the city of Milan for a tour of the top sites. The group paused for quick photos in front of the Duomo Cathedral in the city center and outside of the Santa Maria delle Grazie Monestary, home of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper".



The Mediterranean Cup is the top 13-15 competition in the world. Representatives from some of the top countries were there, including Russia, Canada, Italy, Spain, Greece, France, and Ukraine. Yet, despite the inexperience of the team, the U.S. Team was able to use all of the mental and physical training from the summer to capture a 5th place finish in combo, 6th place finish in team, 7th place finish in solo, and 8th place finish in duet. In addition, all 11 athletes made the first two pages of figures. They had their best swims yet in finals, and really stepped up to the challenges and intensity of the meet. The entire staff was extremely proud of their efforts, and they see a bright future for this group of athletes.