



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Kevin Cordes to Join National Training Centre Squad as Part of Foreign Athlete Sparring Program

SINGAPORE, 23 May 2015 – Singapore Swimming Association (SSA) in collaboration with Singapore Sports Institute (SSI) is set to begin a foreign athlete sparring program in Singapore. The purpose of the program is to raise the standards of Singapore Swimming athletes to world class levels and also to enable them to have an understanding of what it takes to be world class in terms of training standards and attitudes. This is in line with SSA's ultimate goal to establish Singapore Swimming as one of the top in the world over the next five years and also creating a culture of 'Sustainable Success'.

Kevin Cordes, an American breaststroke specialist and current American record holder in the 100m and 200m breaststroke (short course) will be the first foreign athlete to be accepted under this program and will join the National Training Centre (NTC) squad to train under head coach, Sergio Lopez. Cordes will begin training with the NTC squad on 12 June.

"I made the important decision to train with Sergio as I believe this will provide me the individual attention, focus and relationship to help to continue improve for the upcoming World Championships and 2016 Rio Olympic Games," said 21-year-old Cordes.

"I am excited for this change and strongly believes this gives me the opportunity to maximise my success both individually and for Team USA. I am grateful for the full support of coach DeMont (Rocket), USA swimming, SSA and SSI in this endeavour."

SSA hopes that by bringing world class foreign athletes under this program will benefit our Singapore swimmers in the following ways:

- It will promote high standards and expectations for the National Athletes in training.
- It will foster collaboration towards achieving excellence in all areas of Singapore athletes' performances.
- It will promote High Performance Aquatics in Singapore.
- It will provide valuable sports science and sports medicine data on world class athletes to the Singapore Sports Institute.
- It will act as a model for other sports to bring in high level athletes to help Singapore Athletes train and achieve World Class performance levels.



“This is one part of the jigsaw puzzle that will help grow swimming in Singapore. We have brought in a world class coach in Sergio and with the world class sport science support that we are getting from SSI, we are moving towards achieving our goal. Our next step is to bring in world class foreign athletes to spar with our athletes,” said Oon Jin Teik, Secretary-General SSA.

“With the Rio 2016 Olympic Games not far away, our focus was to have someone that is preparing for the Games and Cordes is definitely someone that has a great potential of even winning the gold medal in Rio and we know that by having someone like him here in Singapore, it will greatly benefit our swimmers.”

“Since we started the NTC squad, we have seen a lot of improvements in our swimmers. We have had Quah Zheng Wen clocked an ‘A’ qualifying time for Rio Olympic Games and elder sister, Quah Ting Wen, clocking a ‘B’ qualifying time. By having someone like Cordes to train alongside them, it will inspire our athletes to be like him,” said Joscelin Yeo, Vice-President (Swimming), SSA.

Cordes is a student at University of Arizona. He is a six-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) individual national champion, winning the 100-yard breaststroke (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) and the 200-yard breaststroke (2013, 2014). He is also the 2013 NCAA Swimmer of the Year. Cordes has also represented USA in the 2012 United States Olympic Trials, 2012 FINA Short Course World Championships in Istanbul, 2013 World Championships and 2014 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships.

Head coach Sergio Lopez is delighted to have the foreign athlete sparring program implemented here in Singapore.

“For someone like Cordes to choose to train with the NTC squad speaks volume about what we are doing and what we have here in Singapore. We have breaststroke swimmers like Christopher Cheong and Lionel Khoo who could directly learn a lot from him but for the other swimmers as well, they can see how Cordes trains and learn how it is to be world class in terms of training standards and attitude,” said Sergio.

SSA is also appreciative of the support given by SSI in the collaboration of the foreign athlete sparring program.

“The future of Singapore swimming will rest on how we can connect and leverage on top notch athletes and coaches and keep pace with the high performance developments in world. This is a fantastic initiative where not only the athletes, but also the coaches will gain knowledge and inspiration from world class talents,” said Bob Gambardella, Chief, Singapore Sports Institute, Sport Singapore.



“We believe that our partnership with the Singapore Swimming Association will continue to push our swimmers to greater heights.”

About NTC Squad

The NTC squad was started on 5 January 2015. Led by Sergio Lopez and Gary Tan, the NTC squad currently consist of 33 swimmers who were invited and applied to be part of this National program. The squad is also supported by staff from SSI. The squad trains 11 times a week at the OCBC Aquatic Centre.

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