

## French Swimmers train at the hpc

By Manfred Seidler

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Cold weather in Europe and the World Class Facilities of the hpc of the University of Pretoria were the reasons for some of the French Junior Ladies Swim Team who made their way from Front Romoe in the West of France to train at the hpc.

“It is cold in France right now and we wanted to do some training in warm weather conditions. Steven Ball and Rocco Meiring had visited us in 2004 so we knew about the HPC and decided to come and make use of the facilities. We could not have asked for better. The pool is perfect, the gym compares with the best in the world and of course with the summer here in South Africa the weather is great for training,” said Richard Martinez, the team coach.

Martinez has been coaching swimming for more than 30 years and has a huge knowledge base, one that he is not averse to sharing, as he took the swimmers under Rocco Meiring’s care through their paces on Friday 14 December. Martinez also studied Sports Science at INSPEP (French National Institute of Sport and Physical Education).

“We have spoke quite a bit during their stay here,” says Steven Ball, Head Strength and Conditioning Specialist at the HPC. “Richard is quite open about sharing information and lots of what we chatted about is really good. We haven’t yet had any formal discussions with Richard, but I am sure we will in the future.”

Richard Martinez brought 6 swimmers of the French National Team to train at the HPC between 2 and 15 November. Included in the 6 swimmers were two Olympians in Ophelie-Cyrille Etienne who finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the 200 Freestyle Final and 5<sup>th</sup> in the 4x200m Freestyle Final. Alexianne Castel is the other Olympian who made the trip to the HPC. The 18 year-old Castel made it to the Semifinals of the Womens 200m Backstroke.

For Martinez, the two are the core of his group for the 2012 Olympics. Both have been with Martinez for some time now, Etienne for 4 years and Castel for 3. The other swimmers who made the trip with Martinez are Fanny Ecbabou (100 and 200m Breaststroke), Adelike William (100 and 200m Breaststroke), Lea Girandon (100 and 200m Butterfly) and Lara Ecgrangeon (200 and 400m IM).

During his two weeks at the HPC, Martinez certainly took his swimmers through their paces, working them on 5 session/rest program. A typical 5 session/rest program would have a 2-2.5 hour morning session in the pool, 45min in the gym and then another 2-2.5 hours in the pool in the afternoon. The next day would again see a morning and afternoon session, with day 3 only a morning session.

South African Swimmers will be in action from 1-7 December at the African Championships, for Martinez and his group, December is also not an easy month. From 4-7 December are the French National Short Course Championships. These will serve as the trials for the European Short Course Championships in Rigila, Croatia from 9-14 December.

With the Long Course National Championships in April and the World Championships in July, there is a good chance that Martinez and his 6 swimmers will be back at the HPC in February for further training.

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