

Hello All,

Our athletes and our 757swim Families are living through an unprecedented time. With swimming taking place in a different environment than most other sports, in water training has come to a standstill. Many of our high school graduating seniors are having one of their last ever short course championship meets postponed. Our age group athletes had their championship meet cancelled while most were either already at the pool or minutes away during a 4 hour drive. Facilities are closing their doors and organizations like 757swim are doing everything they can to ensure the same thing we have always fought for, athlete safety. This does not make our athletes seasons or the work they have put in all year any less valid. The work they have done and their achievements this year will always be there, that will never be taken away.

I'd like to share a swimming story that I think has some increased value during this time. The story is about the journey of Katinka Hosszu, a Hungarian Olympic Gold Medalist swimmer. While we will discuss what she achieved in sport, I believe the story has wider reachings than the world of swimming. So let me ask you all a couple questions. When was the last time you failed at something multiple times but you continued fighting for it? How many times did you fail before you turned your sights onto something different? What obstacles have gotten in your way that you have overcome to achieve your goals? Have you ever fought through 12 years of adversity and failures to reach your goals? That is the story of Katinka Hosszu.

Katinka is now known as "The Iron Lady" of swimming. It's how she is announced everytime she swims, it's how she is described during her swims by the announcers and it's even her brand of Arena swimming apparel and suits. While she is known as the Iron Lady for her achievements now, she was not always known as such. In her first Olympic games in Athens 2004, Katinka finished 31st overall in the 200M Freestyle. An impressive feat but not one that would earn her the nickname. In Beijing 2008, Katinka placed 12th in the 400IM and 17th in the 200IM. Still, widely unknown in the world of swimming. (In the video below during the 2008 olympics she is beaten by Hoff of USA, that would be Katie Hoff on Williamsburg, Va USA.)

In London 2012, Katinka was eyeing gold in the 400 IM. Hosszu places 4th in the 400IM (by .5 seconds), 8th in the 200IM and 9th in the 200M Fly. To get that close and miss out on a medal was devastating for Katinka. She had been to 3 olympics and received zero medals for her efforts (again only .5 seconds out of an entire 400IM). About the race, Hosszu says in an interview "I was so focused on winning. The last 100 I'm not winning anymore. I kind of gave up. Gold was gone and battling for bronze didn't enter my mind." After this Olympics Hosszu fell into depression and contemplated retirement. Her coach said to her, "This, what you're feeling right now, is the worst you will ever feel in the sport. You are still alive. Your family still loves you. You're still healthy. I didn't leave. Nobody who cares about you has left your side. Now that you know what this feels like, it's never going to feel as bad as the first time it happened to you." This got her back into the water.

After that olympics and later that same year she finally earns the nickname "The Iron Lady". Katinka competes in the FINA World Cup where she won 5 medals in 2 days and swam 8 separate events (each event she swam twice prelims and finals for a total of 16 events in 2 days.) The Chinese media asked her after the meet, "Are you made of Iron?" due to the heavy workload and how she performed under it. The next morning a Hungarian newspaper was published with the title, "Hungary's Iron Lady." and the nickname has since become how she is referred to.

In 2016 in Rio, Katinka Wins the 400IM and smashes the World Record by 2 seconds in the process. Finally acheiving what she had always wanted 12 years later. She did not stop there, she also won a gold medal in the 100M backstroke, silver in the 200M backstroke and then went on to win gold and set an Olympic Record in the 200IM. The Iron Lady lives up to her name.

If looking for inspiration to not give up despite adversity, look no further. We have been slightly set back, but we have not been stopped. What you have done up to this point is still valid. What you do now will add to what you have already accomplished. How you respond to adversity is what makes you, you. Do not shy away, do not quit. Keep working and keep fighting your time will come. Trust.

https://www.instagram.com/tv/B9T_NxnhKxA/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Stay safe. Stay happy. Stay healthy.

Coach Drew