



## KAZAN 2015 VOLUNTEERS: TEAM ATTACHÉ DIARY

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VOLUNTEERS



On the second day of the water polo tournament, the Croatian team, Olympic champions and favourites of the 16th FINA World Championships, joined the competitions. They won 12-7 in their first FINA Worlds 2015 match against the Canadian team. A team attaché whose work is hidden from the sports tournament spectators is an ultimate team member who is happy about each success and feels stressed about any failure of the team together with the athletes.

During the competitions, a team attaché follows their sports team day by day and serves as a link between the athletes and the Organising Committee, solving all the issues and problems that may arise. Lilia Minullina, an attaché for the Croatian water polo team, told us what it was like to be the main assistant of the Olympic champions.

6:10 a.m.

- Today, my day began at 6:00 a.m. The competitions start at 9:30 a.m., and the official warm up – an hour earlier. It means that I must be at the hotel as early as 7:00 a.m., so that I can meet the team and follow it to the competition venue. I get to the meeting point by public transport. Before the FINA Worlds 2015, all the volunteers were issued transport cards with the trips recorded on. I travel together with my team by shuttle. Why did I decide to become a volunteer? I was awfully pity not to be able to participate in the Kazan 2013 Volunteer Programme due to entering a university. But looking at my volunteer friends, I realised that it was a mistake, and I made up my mind to correct it during the FINA Worlds. Last September, I applied to participate in the volunteer programme, and this summer my dream has come true, as I was appointed a team attaché.

8:50 a.m.

- Before the competitions, I collect the athletes' accreditation badges, and up to the end of the game certain staff members keep them. Further, I follow the team to the call room. They know the Water Polo Arena already, as they had a training session there. They feel comfortable playing at the Arena, and I hope everything will be all right.

9:40 a.m.

- I follow the game from the stands, and I will return to my team right before the game is over. The Croatian team has lost the first goal. Of course, I worry about them so much, though I have never gone in for or played the water polo. During the volunteers allocation, when I was assigned to the water polo team, Croatia (men), I was happy. They are Olympic champions, they know English very well, they are focused to win, and they are interested in the competition itself. I used to play tennis and dance, so sport is something special for me. Now, when I am getting to learn the rules and specifics of the game and can see the competition venue, I am opening this sport for myself. It is something new and exciting.

10:00 a.m.

- Each one accepting an attaché position realises that his/her schedule will be irregular. My delegation has been staying in the city just for three days, and I can not say so far that I have not a single spare minute. For instance, yesterday I started working at 2:00 p.m. My team had daytime training sessions, so my afternoon was quite busy. Today, I am going to spend the whole day with the team, as there will be a game in the morning and a training session in the evening. The attaché position gives you a chance not just to improve English, but to develop your communication skills as well. I like it that I can help my team being a link between them and the Organising Committee. I mainly interact with the Head of the Delegation who communicates the recommendations to the athletes. They are not at all demanding or capricious. The only thing the athletes asked for was to include a lot of fruit in their menu. We tackled the issue at once, and they are quite happy with everything.

10:36 a.m.

- The game is over, Croatia has won! Now I must provide assistance to my team in some important issues. I

am returning the accreditation certificates to the guys, and we are going to the mix zone where the athletes will give their comments to the journalists on their game. After that, everything will depend on the athletes – they may wish either to have a rest at their accommodation place or to watch the games. My team wished to watch the game between China and Brazil.

11:20 a.m.

- As any volunteer, I am sometimes very busy. I can take some rest during the training sessions and official meetings, unless they need me as an interpreter. I try to keep close to my team as much time as possible. This morning, I am with them every minute. Usually, we agree as follows: if they have a training session, I leave for lunch as soon as it starts, do my own business and come back five minutes before it is over. For those 40 minutes at the volunteers' headquarters, I can speak with my friends, learn the latest news, take some rest and have lunch.

12:40 a.m.

- My team, despite their victory, with many games ahead, remain on edge, and we are leaving for the hotel for the athletes to relax a bit. At 6:00 p.m. they will train at the Olymp Swimming Pool. So far, the guys have no time to take in the sights of the city. I hope they will have a chance to walk around Kazan when all the games are over. But it will depend on their wish, though I can see that the city is of great interest for them. On the way, when the guys see the Kremlin or the Kazan Family Centre, they get intrigued and ask me to tell them what it is all about. I try to give some minimum information while on the bus. Of course, they get surprised. They were struck by the Kazan Family Centre, and they were overwhelmed with the Aquatics Palace. What was especially pleasant, when passing the Kazan Arena Stadium, they asked me if that was the place of the Rubin football team. It is just great that Europe knows the Tatarstan team! I hope that the athletes will leave Kazan with good impressions, and they will recollect the city not just in connection with their victories, but also as a place with rich cultural heritage.

Press Office of Organising Committee for 16th FINA World Championships



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