WORLD AQUATICS
CHAMPIONSHIPS
DOHA 2024
بطولة العالم للألعاب المائية

Team Samoa Report

Brandon Schuster

Overview

World Aquatics LCM Championships Doha, Qatar. Samoa selected the two top athletes to represent at Worlds. Johann Stickland (20) and Olivia Borg (22). In addition, two elite development athletes were selected, Kokoro Frost (21) and Kaiya Brown (19), completing the team of four athletes.

Before the competition had started, Olivia Borg had contacted and expressed her intention to retire. This was acknowledged, and the relevant personnel were informed for Worlds. The team was then capped at three: Johann, Kaiya and Kokoro.

For team management, the role of Coach was Brandon Schuster.

Results

Name	Event	Seed Time	Results	WA Points	Rank	Evaluation
Kaiya Brown	50m Free	28.04	28.30	580	69/113	
	100m Free	1:02.01	1:02.63	562	63/88	
Johann Stickland	50m Free	23.40	23.75	682	66/112	
	100m Free	52.08	52.33	718	56/119	
Kokoro Frost	50m Fly	25.58	25.86	638	46/69	
	100m Fly	1:00.20	59.75	566	59/71	

Kokoro Frost

Kokoro has returned from multiple training sessions and one specific intensive training program with Mitch in Auckland, which proved very beneficial in mental and physical encouragement. His performance in the 100m Fly was the most impressive of his swims, going a lifetime second best. Still needs some work on back half speed and chest placement within his stroke. His mental maturity increased throughout the competition and showed, at times, the leadership he had back at the Pacific Games. The 50m fly was slightly disappointing with his expectations for himself, but has a good head on moving on to the next race. Will need to continue and reevaluate the training environment. A good coach at home but needs to be pushed with by a team, possibly extra sessions with Mitch and team NZ before Oceania.

Team Dynamic

Kokoro can be very mature and a leader within a team but struggles to toe the line when not specifically instructed where those lines are. At the start of the competition, he exhibited some immature and unprofessional characteristics. However, once confronted, he fell in line with the standards that Samoa Aquatics expects from its athletes. Solid team player showing support and encouragement for teammates and very expressive and engaged within morning meetings and devos. Will need to learn how to keep a stronger hold on switching between casual and professional.

Johann Stickland

Johann has had a drive post-Pacific Games to really increase his base and 100m Free speed. He and his coach have also been training more in 50m pools in preparation for Worlds. His times from his swims came close to those from the Pacific Games. The 100m Free was disappointing as he saw too much in his head going too slow in the first 50m and finished the race with too much energy. He spoke about how he went out too slowly and was very disappointed. Though, as a coach, it was encouraging to have him so close to his PB and having the energy at the end of the race, breaking 52 is around the corner. Like Pacific Games he struggles with keeping energetic and expectant when his swims do not align with his expectations. This again some issues within the team dynamic. The 50m Free was also within expectations Johann does seem to be a bit heavy for some of the races; prep and food before racing are also interesting, and completely carb diets across all meals.

Team Dynamic

Johann is a team player but struggles with team environments when he isn't competing well, not to the extent of Pacific Games, but post 100m Fr he gets reclusive and isolates himself from the team, causing some unneeded tension. While that is the case, he is always energetic and can be a much-needed sparkplug within the team when feeling good. He needs some direction in understanding the extent and standard of representing a country, which seems to escape him. This is expected as it is his first Worlds meet for him. However, I would like to see a more mature and professional attitude when representing Samoa, over the course of the competition, he had signs of improving. Also, sometimes he would not join team meals as he would be on the phone at home, which seemed to be a bit disconnected from the team, as well as being on his phone with AirPods at the dining table.

Kaiya Brown

Kaiya Has shown large improvements in maturity and mentality for this competition compared to previous team Samoa reps. She tackled her competition anxiety well having some key techniques to assist her. She was very secure and vocal with her performance a very mature and understanding position to her results. Both the 100m Fr and 50m Fr are the best of the season so far, and her being excited to build upon these results. She had competed in the 100m Fr weeks prior and hit s 1:04, so a 1:02 was a solid performance. There is still some untapped potential within her, and the session with the biomechanics coach helps her target some of her biomechanics (head position, pull and recovery) and possibly put more time into strength training to develop some sprinter strength. Kaiya must step up as she is the primary female position since Olivia has retired.

Team Dynamic

Given the team dynamic, Kaiya was the only female and did well. She is by herself in accommodation and is the youngest on the team. She showed maturity the most out of the team and was very engaging during team devos. Like all swimmers, they needed to understand what being an ambassador for Samoa means to them, and I didn’t have time to get their responses but told them to meditate on it till Oceania. The team worked well together, with only some immaturity at the start of the competition that was addressed and a Laissez-faire attitude to team preparations.

Overall Team Dynamic

The two boys roomed together while Kaiya roomed by herself. The boys had the largest room, so devo was held in their room every morning before sessions and training. Each morning consisted of devo then breakfast, then catching the bus to the pool. We decided on the devo time, depending on who was racing the next day and when they needed to start warm-up. Afternoons consisted of team lunch and rest, followed by team dinners. Overall, the team worked well together and bounced off each other's energy.

Team Uniform

Samoa Aquatics provided two tshirts (unbranded) and screen printed for this competition.

Conclusion

Leading this team at the World Aquatics Championships 2024 was a pleasure, as a first competition to lead a team it was daunting and proved difficult at times due to the close age to the swimmers but overall seemed to gel well. The team in the end help themselves with maturity and I see a lot of good growth in the future for these athlete both in and out of the water. I look forward to their continued excellence in representing Samoa.