

Press release

Thank you so much for coming toady, I greatly appreciate your attendance, but I deeply regret that the situation has gotten to the point where I must do this in front of the media.

The reason I returned to Hungary 3 years ago was to get involved with Hungarian Swimming, Hungarian Sports and to help do something positive for the country and inspire future generations.

However, it became clear that while the Hungarian Swimming Federation expects world class performances, the support they provide is far from world class level. They have grown complacent with the status quo and has become short sighted with the comfortability of being just good enough for the moment.

To the outside public everything looks fine, as we continue to bring home medals from championships meets, however, the system is flawed and I can't pretend anymore that everything is great, when it is not.

The federation set up a system where athletes and coaches spend much of their time fighting organizational boundaries, infighting and broken processes. Many are not clear what the goals and requirements are, so there is no way of knowing if they are getting the job done or not. In the case that they accomplish something special, they have no idea what it means for their career. To make it all much worse and rub salt on the wound when they finally work up the courage to speak up, the federation denies there is a problem, defends the status quo, then ignores the problem.

I know with that being said, I have just opened myself up to possible attacks but I am willing to take the hit because I feel it is time to stand up not only for myself but for all the hungarian swimmers as well. For me, my career won't matter if I don't leave the sport better than when I started. It is not about the number of medals I win, not about the amount of prize money in my bank account. I'm in the fortunate situation where I can use my position to help those who can't afford to stand up and say something for fear of losing the minimal support they do receive.

For the past three years I have been trying to solve this problem in house, behind close doors with the federation but I have found deaf ears.

If the federation worked well, athletes and coaches would have clear, concise goals and requirements so they can just focus on their work knowing, if they reach their goals, good things will happen to them. It is a true pleasure to be a part of an organization such as this. Every person can wake up knowing that the work they do will be efficient, effective and make a difference for both hungarian swimming and themselves. These things make their careers both motivating and fulfilling.

In my program with Shane, we are constantly analyzing the program to find ways to improve. The number one rule of our program is that we cannot be complacent with the status quo. It is my strong belief that if we are not taking steps forward, we are moving backwards. We constantly have to ask ourselves the tough questions: What are we doing wrong? What are we doing good, but not great? Where can we improve?

Every time we've asked these questions and have been honest with ourselves, we have found significant improvements and the proof is in our continued results. Following Kazan, we asked ourselves once more these questions. Having broken the 200 IM world record, placing myself 2 seconds in front of the rest of the world and essentially putting a target on my back as the clear gold medal favorite going into the Olympic Games, we knew we still had to find ways to improve. In our efforts, we not only found technical and training aspects to improve but we also found a number of other aspects which would make the program complete and well rounded. Bringing a monumental, immediate impact during a vital year would hopefully continue to make the olympic final just another race.

However, the changes I wanted to add to my program this year would not only benefit me but also bring long term, future benefits to the present and future generations of swimmers as knowledge and skills would be accumulated and spread throughout the community. In addition, these changes would hopefully ease the stress on my body making it far more likely that I would continue to be in peak condition to represent Hungary in the 2020 Olympics as well.

After multiple sit downs, explanations and official requests I was unfortunately denied these resources. I was told I could have them on the condition that I lend my image and brand to the organizational committee for the 2017 FINA World Championships to be held in Budapest. This was a shock to me as we had always been told that bringing results from championship meets would bring the benefit of additional resources for future preparation- the infamous carrot on the stick.

This was the end. This broke me. In 2011 with only a 6th place at the World Championships I was tagged as bringing no results and received no additional resources for the preparation for the Olympics Games. In 2012, having placed 4th in the olympic final, again I was tagged with no results and again received no additional resources. I never once complained as they convinced me that I did not bring results and only those who were deemed to have brought results earned additional resources. However, to my surprise, having won two World Championship titles in 2013 also brought no additional resources. The significant results of the 2014 season likewise brought no additional help from the Hungarian Swimming Federation. And now, if this year's results did not deem me eligible for additional resources, I asked myself, what more could I accomplish so I receive the additional resources for my preparation?

This was a rude awakening and opened my eyes for all the rest of the swimmers and coaches who are not in my position. If I still have to chase the carrot on the stick, what hope do other swimmers have? Is there even a carrot on the end of the stick?

Do not get me wrong. This is not about money. It is not about the finances. I can afford to pay for all the resources I would need to make these improvement to my program. In fact, I would have no problem continuing to reinvest my prize money into my own continued success however if I were to pay for all my additional resources which hopefully make it easier for me to achieve our mutual goals then what is purpose of the federation? What are they doing if not providing for their swimmers? If it is up to us to research, analyze, train and then compete, what role does that leave for the federation in this partnership? Not to mention that I know from experience that we are competing against athletes who are strongly supported in more ways than in Hungary we can imagine.

We must be honest with ourselves in order to improve on the system. We must work together to ask ourselves the hard questions as a whole. It is a disappointment at this point, that the athlete is expected to bring everything to the table. In this partnership, a federation should be equipped and specialized in bringing these types of resources, knowledge, and program developments to the athletes and coaches.

We need to have highly ambitious people working in the Hungarian Swimming Federation whose main goal is to help maximize the athletes' potential. Unfortunately, the current management seem to think we are good enough as we are. They have become complacent because the results have always come. However, in my opinion, we cannot wait until we completely fall apart to realize we are not doing something right.

I have always been driven to be the best I can possibly be and I refuse to let the people around me accept less than their best. Our country is unbelievably talented, and honestly we have the potential to be one of the greatest swimming nations in the World. So, then why are we sitting back and settling for good enough? Everyone in the system needs to step up, to bring the results and represent Hungary, the way it deserves to be represented - not just the swimmers.

My goal has always been to leave swimming better than when I started. I feel it is my responsibility to voice my opinion and my suggestions. People might not like it, but getting better and pushing forward is painful sometimes.

Please don't take this as an attack on the Hungarian Federation, the goal of this press conference is to initiate change for the better!

Thank you.