



North Shore Amateur Swimming Club Inc

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KIWI SWIMMERS GIVE THUMBS UP TO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

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New Zealand swimmers have given the thumbs up for the drop-in pool at the Rod Laver Arena for the 12th FINA World Championships in Melbourne.

The New Zealand team had their first training session in the 50m pool today with coach Jan Cameron labeling it as outstanding, as are the surrounds at the arena which usually hosts the Australian Open tennis and other major events.

The eight-day pool competition begins on Sunday with a record 2195 competitors from 173 countries at the championships.

“The pool is 3m deep water which means there will be no real waves off the bottom and the lane ropes are fantastic and will breakdown most of the wash,” Cameron said. “The swimmers say the starting blocks are excellent and overall it is a great set-up”

“The roof is relatively low and with over 9000 people in here, it is going to provide an incredible atmosphere. It has everything you need for a great meet.”

Cameron is not one that espouses the view that it is a particularly fast pool.

“Fast swimmers make for a fast pool. And all the fast swimmers are here and there’s no reason why people can’t produce their best in this place.” She said the swimmers were also impressed by the plush surrounds of the changing rooms, set up for the superstar tennis players.

“It’s like a five-star hotel compared with most changing rooms in a swimming pool,” Cameron joked.

The full New Zealand squad is now in Melbourne and raring to go. “Those at the camp in Thredbo are all in great shape. It was the perfect place for us to prepare. It was quiet, within a couple of minutes walk and very relaxing for everyone. The sprinters Cameron Gibson and Zoe Baker have joined us from Christchurch and Lauren Boyle has arrived from the US and all have settled into the team well.”

“We will have some more relay practice tomorrow and will try out the blocks with some starts, and then probably do the same on Saturday in a very light session ahead of the start on Sunday.”

Cameron said the aim is to improve world rankings for all swimmers with only three seeded in the top 10 – Hannah McLean who is ranked fourth in the 100m backstroke, Moss Burmester sixth in the 200m butterfly and Zoe Baker sixth in the 50m breaststroke.

“I’d hope that our relays could rank in the top 12 with some top performances and we will be looking for other swimmers to push up into semi-final and finals contention.”

New Zealand qualified for three finals last in Montreal last year with Dean Kent, Liz Coster and McLean. “If they perform to their best we could see Moss and Corney Swanepoel pushing for finals also. “With Beijing Olympics in mind, we are looking for our elite swimmers and our relays to push up the rankings to eye finals next year.”

NB: There will be a further preview tomorrow, with a wrap of heats by 3pm (NZ time) each day, flash results when applicable at night and an evening wrap by 11.30pm.