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Fodor making most of 'comeback'

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SARASOTA

Three years ago, Kata Fodor made a monumental sacrifice -- she gave up her teenage lifestyle to swim and she has never looked back.

A competitive swimmer since age 6, Fodor quit the sport when she was in fifth grade because she felt "burned out."

By the time she was 10, she had already spent three years with Swim Florida at the Sarasota Boys & Girls Club and felt like she had less and less time for friends and schoolwork.

However, the native of Hungary got back into swimming by the time she was an eighth-grader at Booker Middle School, joining the Sarasota YMCA Sharks and rekindling the flames of a dying passion.

"I got back into it because I missed being able to swim every day," Fodor said. "I missed the competition and the training that came along with it."

Nowadays, Fodor can be seen competing at Booker High. As a sophomore, she finished second in the 200 intermediate medley at the Class 4A State Finals. As a freshman, she placed fourth in the state in both the 200- and 500- meter freestyle events.

"My team is my family," Fodor said. "There isn't much time to hang out with friends because to compete at this level you have to give up a lot of your own time. If I'm not swimming, I'm really tired. It's the teenage life that I'm giving up, but it's worth it."

Fodor is also making a splash on the international stage. Fodor has her sights set set on competing in the Hungarian Short-Course Nationals Nov. 16-18, less than two weeks after the 4A state meet concludes.

By placing either first or second in any of her events in Hungary, Fodor will automatically be chosen to represent the Hungarian national swim team in the FINA European Championships in December.

Born in Szekszard, Hungary, Fodor moved to Sarasota at the age of 6. Although this is her first time competing in the short-course nationals, Fodor did compete previously in Hungary's long-course nationals. This past July she placed third in the 800-meter freestyle.

Along with swimming for Hungary at the Euro-Championships, Fodor will also be on Hungary's Olympic swim team at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, if she finishes in the top two at the short-course nationals.

The only difference between the short-course and long-course events is that a short-course pool is 25 meters in length while a long-course pool is approximately 50 meters long.

"If I make this team, my dream will come true," Fodor said. "It'll take the swim of my life to accomplish my goal, and I'm really focused for this event. I know the competition and what's waiting for me out there."



HERALD-TRIBUNE / FILE PHOTO

Kata Fodor, a junior at Booker High, will compete in the Hungarian short-course national swim meet Nov. 16-18. She needs to finish first or second in any of her events to qualify for the Hungarian Olympic swim team.

