

Arena signs Danish backstroke prodigy



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arena water instinct

Details Tolentino, 24 March 2014 – **Arena**, one of the world's leading brands in aquatic sports, is pleased to announce that it has signed a sponsorship deal with the promising Danish backstroke, freestyle and IM swimmer, **Mie Østergaard Nielsen**. The 17-year-old first burst on to the international scene as a 15-year old at the 2011 European Short Course Swimming Championships, where she won four medals and was named newcomer of the meet.

The daughter of Olympic silver medallist Benny Nielsen (200m butterfly, 1988 Olympics in Seoul) and 1978 World Aquatics Championships swimmer Lone Jensen, it was natural that Mie took to the water at the age of five. After seeing how much her elder sister enjoyed the sport, she was inspired to continue, and it wasn't long before her talent started emerging.

In 2011, when she was just 15, Mie mounted the podium eight times at major international events. First, at the European Junior Championships in Belgrade, she won both 50m and 100 backstroke events, and also took home the 100m freestyle silver and 4x100m medley relay bronze. Five months later, at the European SC Championships in in Szczecin, Poland, she won bronze medals in 100m backstroke and 100m IM, and was part of the Danish gold-medal 4x50m medley and second-placed 4x50m freestyle relay teams.

It was a sign of things to come, as 2012 and 2013 produced a series of spectacular results. In March 2012, she broke the Danish 100m backstroke record at the Danish Open, and four months later, made her Olympic debut, competing in four events. While she didn't make it out of her two backstroke heats, Mie made the finals as part of the 4x100m freestyle and 4x100m medley relay teams, helping to break the national records in both. She then ended the year in fine style at the World SC Championships in Istanbul, where she won the 100m backstroke silver medal (and set a new Danish record), was part of the gold-medal 4x100 medley relay team, which set a new European record, and set new national records with both the 4x100 freestyle relay team (which won the bronze medal), and the 4x200m freestyle relay team.

2013 brought both disappointment and triumph, as a persistent knee problem requiring surgery ruled her out of the World Championships in Barcelona, followed by a quick and successful recovery that brought further successes. In October Mie broke the Danish 200m SC freestyle record held by fellow arena swimmer Lotte Friis, and at the European SC Championships at Herning in her home country, she won two gold medals and a silver, setting a new European record in her victorious 100m backstroke final, along with national records in the 4x50m freestyle (gold medal), 4x50 medley relay (silver medal), and 50m backstroke (finalist).

2014 has started well for Mie, as she set a new Danish LC 50m backstroke record in January. Ahead of her are numerous local and European meets leading up to August's European Championships in Berlin, where she will certainly be a strong medal contender in her events, still a month shy of her

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18th birthday.

Mie attends the Aalborghus Gymnasium in the North Jutland peninsula town of Aalborg, where she studies biotechnology, mathematics, and physics.

“I am really happy to have been noticed and selected by arena,” said Mie, “and I am looking forward to working with the company and representing them to the best of my ability.”

“We are very pleased to have Mie representing the Arena brand at both international as well as national level” stated Henrik Norre Nielsen, Arena Distributor in Denmark. “She is beyond doubt the most promising young swimmer, which is a perfect match for the Arena brand. We look forward to supporting Mie in achieving her goals.”