

Long years of success for evergreen Santos

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, August 19, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nicholas Santos showed talent from the start, nearly two decades ago, but nobody could have imagined then that he would still be a top contender deep into his 30s, one of the oldest in elite swimming history. Santos won a short-course world title last December, turned 39 in February this year and hopes to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics at the age of 40. His discipline and love for what he does propels him to new challenges.

"I would not do anything different," he says. "I'm very grateful and happy with the results and all that swimming has brought me. Friends, opportunity to

visit different countries, deal with competition, adversity, defeats and the chance to be strategic in these situations. I had the opportunity to train in a few clubs in Brazil and a good part of my career with Albertinho (Alberto Silva), with whom I won medals in World Championships, Pan American Games and achieved times for the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games.

"I have never had an injury" An out-and-out sprinter, Santos broke the 50m butterfly short-course record at a World Cup meet in Budapest last October with a time of 21.75sec and won the 50m butterfly title at the 2018 World Swimming Championships (25m) in Hangzhou (CHN) in December, the culmination of a special programme developed with his current coach, Felipe Domingues.

He also trained for a short time with Brett Hawke, the Australian who was named assistant coach for Brazil before the 2016 Rio Olympics. Santos said it was a very positive and important time for his career, when he had the opportunity to join a professional team with big names in swimming.

One opportunity he missed, and one on which he might have acted differently with hindsight, was the chance to take up offers to train in the United States, when he was younger. "I did not go, but I did not put my studies aside. I graduated in physiotherapy in Brazil and then I did an MBA with an emphasis on entrepreneurship," he said.

Santos competed in his first world championships in Fukuoka in 2001, finishing 30th in the 50m freestyle. Today his medal collection features two silvers from the long-course Worlds (Kazan 2015 and Budapest 2017), both in the 50m butterfly; four golds, three silvers and three bronzes from the short-course Worlds; two golds and one silver from the Pan American Games; one silver from the Pan Pacific Championships; one gold, one silver and two bronzes from the Universiade (World Student Games).

His performance in the biggest world events was timid until 2004, when at the World Swimming



Photo: Satiro Sodre/SS Press

Championships (25m) in Indianapolis he claimed a silver as a member of the 4x100m free relay and a bronze in the 50m free.

From that moment he was set to grow and to make a name in the Brazilian team. Nicholas was the second Brazilian to swim the 50m freestyle below 22 seconds and is still among the greatest sprinters of the day. The comparison with good wines, which improve as they get older, sounds like a cliché, but it's totally true when it comes to Nicholas Santos, because at the age of 32 at the 2012 short-course Worlds he won the 50m butterfly title in a championship record 22.22.

He recaptured the title last December in Hangzhou and lowered the championship record to 21.81. He says that competing without serious injuries has helped him to prolong his career at the top. "I have never had an injury and I owe this to the fact that I studied physiotherapy, so I was able to react quite fast and properly whenever I felt pain or sustained just a minor injury. I also believe that my physical preparation helps me a lot, as it is very different from what I did years ago." "I just don't need inappropriate training volumes"

Born in Ribeirao Preto, a city in the interior of Sao Paulo State, he says there are no secrets to get this far. He highlights his commitment to everything he chooses to do. Since the beginning of his career, he has taken care of body and nutrition. However, something has changed since his first World Championships in Fukuoka in 2001: his mental preparation. Nicholas said he evolved this aspect, which gave him self-knowledge and allowed him to develop all his potential: "I think the work in and out of the water has changed too much. Today my training is much more qualitative, since I already had a good base, and what I need to do is some adjustments in the events, maintain muscular power, do great work with the technique and analysis of my way of swimming. I just don't need inappropriate training volumes."

His normal week consists of nine training sessions in the pool and three dry-land exercises. His multi-disciplinary support team comprises coach Felipe Domingues, assistant coach Gustavo Schirru, biomechanic expert Samie Elias, physical trainer Luigi Marino, nutritionist [Marcella Amar](#), physiotherapist Natan Cunha and doctor Gustavo M. Following on from his MBA degree, Nicholas is indeed entrepreneurial: he does clinics and lectures with 'Elite Training', a company that focuses on physical training, consulting and training certification and works in a business partnership with the American company 'Athletic Lab', which also holds high-performance meetings for coaches, reaching as far as Brazil and Europe.

"Maybe go back to training for the 50m free" Santos understandably says that one of the most striking moments of his sporting life was to become champion and world record holder in 2018, at the age of 38, already a father. Another experience he says he can't forget is the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where he finished 16th in the 50m free.

Old can win gold: aged 38, Nicholas still ruled the 50m fly at the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Hangzhou last December.

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