

Porenta's Olympic hopes further fueled by overseas excursion

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Jennifer Porenta's swimming skills have allowed her to do a fair amount of globetrotting already.

But booking passage for at least one more overseas excursion — namely, to next summer's Olympics in Athens, Greece — remains her primary objective.

"I think I've got a legitimate chance (of going)," Milton's top pool shark said.

That cautious optimism comes on the heels of a recent journey to the World University Games in South Korea, where the 18-year-old freestyle specialist highlighted her efforts with a personal best in the 200m.

A 2:02.53 finish earned her a sixth place finish and, more importantly, was within striking distance of the Olympic qualifying time — an even two minutes.

"It was actually surprising, since the 200m isn't usually one of my best events," said Porenta, who swam against former world record holder Yana Klochkova and shed more than half-a-minute off her individual benchmark.

Nailing a two-minute 200m at next summer's Olympic Trials in Etobicoke — where she's spent countless hours training and competing — should put her in line for a trip to Athens.

The same can be said for a 56-second effort in the 100m — a mark she came close to attaining at this summer's World Trials in Victoria, where she established a new personal record of 56.86s.

Explained Porenta, "I'd say those are my best shots (at the Olympics). I'm still about a second off the qualifying time in the 50m



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JENNIFER PORENTA

free, which is probably too much to make up in the shorter race."

As for the lengthier events, the local teen remains confident that she can close the gap — especially with an increased training regiment at the University of Toronto, where she's now a freshman.

"It's going to be a lot more intense over the next several months and I'm really anxious to see just how much faster I can go," she remarked. "I know there's more I can give, especially in the 200m. A two to two-and-a-half second improvement is certainly possible."

Porenta's Canada women's team took seventh in all three relays they entered in South Korea — including the 4x100m free, 4x200m free and 4x100m medley.

While her 100m efforts weren't quite up to par and her 50m performance was a self-described disaster, she looks upon last month's competition as a "real eye opener" and one that should only fuel her overall quest.

Milton's 2004 Summer Games hopeful will participate at the short course nationals in Quebec in November and is also expected to spend some time training in Arizona before next July's Olympic trials.

Steve LeBlanc can be reached at sleblanc@haltonsearch.com.

'AA' minor atoms eclipsed in early bird tourney finals

Oh, so close.

Milton's AA minor atoms came within a heartbeat of winning the Flamborough Early Bird Tournament — falling 1-0 to the hosts in championship play September 21.

Brendan Bodian surrendered the game winner with five minutes remaining, but was otherwise exceptional to keep title hopes alive for the Mattamy Homes Winterhawks.

Milton had tied Flamborough 3-3 in the first round — rallying from a three-goal deficit. "Both games were so evenly matched, and the goaltending was just outstanding in the finals," said head

coach Brian Schroder.

Offering topnotch defensive support in the championship showdown were Cam Stockall and Eric Schroder.

The Winterhawks went undefeated to reach the gold-medal match, highlighting their run with a 2-1 semifinal squeaker over Guelph. Justin Davidson stood tall between the pipes, while netting both goals was Matthew Hunter.

Other offensive standouts were centres Nicholas Garcia and Liam Robinson, who factored heavily into each game's output. Milton's other victims were Cooksville (7-1) and Welland (3-2).

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