

She vibrates, she cheers and she... plays

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An Argentinian with a 'macaenian' heart? Can you believe that? Well, it is true, since Macaé Sports's volleyball team has an Argentinean player who is passionate not only for the team, but also for the people she met. She is Jesica Umansky, a 17-year-old, 1.72 meters and 70 kg.

Playing the setter position, Jesica was invited by the club's President, Fred Kohler, to play the local juniors' tournament in Brazil while she was still playing the South American championship in Bolivia. "I never thought that one day I could make a living playing volleyball, in Argentina it is almost impossible. When I got the invitation, I was extremely surprised with the possibility and the experience I could achieve", she says.

When she started playing volleyball, at the age of nine, Jesica was one of the tallest players. However, with time, her passion for volleyball increased but not her height. And just because willpower makes things happen, it was then that Jesica the setter was born. Since passion and determination are two of the most prominent characteristics in Jesica's personality, becoming a setter was more of a reward to her talent, which vibrates like an agitated heart and practices like if she was in the final match of an Olympic Game.

She's an only child but determined to conquer her independence; Jesica always had the liberty in deciding her future: "my parents and I are really close. Before I make any major decision, I always ask their opinion. It is very democratic, they respect my position and encourage me with they support", she comments.

FUTURE

When she's questioned about the future, Jesica smiles and talks with a very "Portuguese" Spanish accent. "Before I came to Brazil I had everything planned in my head. I was going to keep playing volleyball and when I finished high school I was going to go to college and study psychology. That was my thought because the idea of making a living out of volleyball seemed impossible. Now everything is different. I believe I can make a living with volleyball but, even so, I still consider the idea of becoming a psychologist. We will see", she explains.

INTENSE PRACTICES

“What impressed me the most when I got here was the rhythm of the practices. In Buenos Aires I used to practice three to four times per week. Here I do that every day. I came with the idea that I was going to be pushed here. I knew that I will be living in one of the countries with the best volleyball in the world”, commented Jessica very enthusiastic with the results that the team has been achieving. For her, before Brazil there’s only Italy when talking about volleyball. She says: “This experience I’m living here is priceless. Practices are of the best quality, and people in the area are just amazing. They’ve treated me very kindly. I consider Ayrton an amazing professional because in the court he’s very demanding, but outside he’s a pal”.

SELF-EVALUATION

When Jessica makes a self-evaluation, she says that her best skill is defense and that the willingness and passion need always to be present. “Everything we do needs to be done with enjoyment and we need to fight really hard to make improvements. We should not be worried in making money or being famous. That’s the difference. If we do it with our hearts and our souls, the rewards are wonderful”. With a very mature statement, Jessica let us know what she came here for.

She says again that in Argentina volleyball players play because they like to; they don’t make a lot of money. Therefore, if they don’t have the passion for what they do, they just quit.

Whether she is going to keep playing for Macae Sports, we don’t know yet, but she loves the idea. The initial contract was just to play the State Championship. She needs to return to her country because she has to finish her contract with her Argentinean club team, Nautico Hacoaj.

AN ARGENTINIAN TEENAGER

Like every teenager, Jessica has conquered a heart in Macae. But according to her, Brazilian men fall in love too fast. She affirms that she is more careful and that she prefers to get to know the other person better. However, when love is the topic, everything changes.

On top of listening to music, Jessica loves dancing, watching movies, reading and making friends. “There are so many people from different places here in Macae, but even though, we became great friends; a big family”.

During the interview, which took place in a room at the SESC, the manager of the institution, Claudio Brito, entered the room with a letter for her. Her eyes shone with curiosity and became euphoric when she read that the sender was her Argentinean club coach, to which she will return soon.