

## Olympic Hopeful Emily Kopas Prepares for Trials



University School student Emily Kopas is fifteen years old, making her one of the youngest athletes who will compete in the 2012 Olympic swim trials.

“I’m just a rookie, trying to do my best and see what happens,” Kopas said. “It’s just an honor to be there next to people who have had tremendous success and won gold medals.”

Kopas’ answers mark her as a strong competitor as surely as her accomplishments to date; the best are often humble and fully aware of the work that it takes to be a top performer in a sport. An incoming USchool junior, Kopas is the Southern Sectional Champion, a 2012 NCSA Junior National Runner-Up, a 2011 Florida High School State Champion and several times FGC (Florida Gold Coast) record holder. She also is a top student, and she already won “gold” earlier this year for her National Scholastic Art Award-winning sculpture titled “Family”.

The tightly knit Kopas clan represented in her art piece will be cheering Emily on as she pursues Olympic gold, starting with the 2012 trials to be held in Omaha, Nebraska. Kopas will compete in not one, but two events: 100 meter breaststroke and 200 meter breaststroke.

“My parents are equally as excited as I am,” Kopas said. “They ask me every day ‘are you excited?’ My dad gave me a high-five this morning. And my mom gets really nervous [during meets] and paces the bleachers.”

Kopas’ grandparents will also make the trip to the Olympic trials along with her little sisters who have a secondary reason for being excited: “They think Ryan Lochte is cute,” Kopas shared.

Such distractions are not an issue for Kopas, however. The young Olympic hopeful is focused and plans to arrive a few days early to get used to the CenturyLink Center pool, specifically the fact that this pool does not have gutters, which could cause her hands to slip when making turns if she was not aware of the difference.

Her goals for competing are also clear.

“I hope to make Top 8 and shoot for Top 2 possibly; it would be such an honor to go to London and represent the U.S.,” Kopas said. “But it is also about getting experience. I have nothing to lose, and I can try for Brazil in four years, and the next Olympics after that, too.”

Simultaneous in her pursuit of the highest athletic honor – to represent the U.S. -- Kopas let us know that she will be representing the US Suns: “I will be wearing a green suit, so I will be representing USchool!” Kopas said. Kopas added that she is grateful to her teachers, coaches, friends and family for all of their support.

To see Kopas in action, go to [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org) to watch the prelims live Tuesday, June 26 and Thursday, June 28. Her events are currently anticipated to take place early afternoon. To cheer Kopas on virtually, visit all three of USchool’s Facebook pages to “like” and comment on the special banners and posts commemorating this benchmark in her young journey. (University School of NSU [Main](#), [Arts](#), [Athletics](#))