



, they get huge finances from the city and the regions and the pool is given for free to the clubs. Parents are more involved here, but I prefer the public system in France.”

To combat these setbacks, Dorgigne has put in a lot of work. He holds practice sessions across the province, offering his guidance to athletes and educating coaches.

Additionally, Dorgigne created structured leagues for different age groups, allowing teams to play a league game every two weeks or once a month. There were only recreational programs when he joined. Tournaments — mainly one-day events in Saskatchewan — are now held once every three weeks, which is high when compared to the estimated three per year in which athletes used to compete.

Dorgigne still hopes to increase enrolment numbers for Water Polo Saskatchewan to match water polo programs across the country, but he still has a lot to celebrate.

“I think I have a good vision,” Dorgigne says. “I hoped to bring a program that could take the kids who understand water polo and step-by-step bring them all the way to high performance and national teams, while being a leader in the country in their age groups.”

This vision has led to four national appearances by Saskatchewan and 10 athletes receiving national exposure, including 17-year-old Weyburn product Russell Lenferna, who stops to talk about Dorgigne before joining his teammates in the pool.

Under his coach’s guidance, Lenferna had the opportunity to represent Saskatchewan on the junior national Canadian water polo team at the Pan American Games in Puerto Rico over the summer. The team finished fifth and qualified for the world championship.

“Really, I only started developing as a player when Cyril came over,” Lenferna says. “That’s when water polo started for me and I started to take it to the next level, just because of the higher level of coaching he brought to Saskatchewan. He brought his own water polo from France here to Saskatchewan.”

Saskatchewan may never compare to France when it comes to delectable food and fine wine, but at least the water polo programs are becoming similar.

“I know that we have the best program here in the country here for now,” Dorgigne says. “On the girls’ side, we are definitely as good as in France. On the boys’ side, we have very excellent athletes, but we are a bit behind.”

At the conclusion of the interview, Dorgigne heads over to the pool and gives instruction to his athletes. He stands there and focuses intently. Even with the success of his program, he’s always thinking of more ways to bring the organization to the next level.

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