

## THE WOODLANDS DIVING ACADEMY'S CHRISTINA LOUKAS, MICHELLE CABASSOL AND KASSIDY COOK



"I feel really strong and we are just concentrating on strengthening my legs and core, while staying flexible," she said. "I'm getting prepared for the Fina Grand Prix (Ft. Lauderdale) right now and the upcoming trials."

Cabassol also has Olympic aspirations as a 10-meter platform diver. She has signed with Purdue University for a coveted full scholarship spot. There are not many athletes that are granted a full college ride for diving. For now, she is preparing for the Canada Cup at the end of April.

"I dropped gymnastics when I young and started diving competitively at the age of five," she said. "I've always been competitive and I am not scared to work hard. Outside of diving, I'm working out or getting involved with my church."

The Woodlands' sophomore Cassidy Cook is on the fast-track for Olympic dreams in 2012. Cook is well before her time, competing in national and international events with athletes a decade older than her. She's headed to Russia, Mexico and England in 2011 as well as the USA Grand Prix and World Competition in China.

"Worlds is like our sports version of the Super Bowl," she said. "Diving is what I do, not who I am. I get a lot from the media but I'm just a normal person. I really don't feel that I'm any different than my friends I go to school with. I do sacrifice a lot, but I make time to have fun with my best friends. I try and keep my life balanced."

Jonkins will be accompanying Cook and Loukas on their trip to the Fina Grand Prix in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"The diving community is great and really welcoming," Jonkins said. "I look forward to meeting the USOC representatives there and getting an up close and personal look at the sport."



The Woodlands Diving Academy (WDA) is a nationally-recognized club that produces decorated swimmers with loft expectations.

The academy has dozens of national team championships at the senior and junior levels, and has propelled dozens of athletes to the college ranks.

Led by program director Kenny Armstrong and senior coach Bob Gunter, the academy is in good hands. Armstrong was a three-time Olympic diver and a three-time U.S. Olympic coach, where he coached Olympic Gold Medalist Laura Wilkinson at the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games.

The WDA has another strong stable of divers this season, headlined by Olympic participant Christina Loukas, Montgomery's Michelle Cabassol and The Woodlands' prodigy Cassidy Cook.

All three complement their diving practices with strength and conditioning training through well-known trainer Derrick Jonkins.

Jonkins, who has clients across the country, trains out of the Legends Sports Complex in The Woodlands when he is in Houston. He has proven to be one of the top trainers for the company he keeps. From professional clients all the way down to youth, Jonkins gets his athletes results regardless of the competition level.

"There are not too many trainers in the United States or the world that get to train Olympic-caliber athletes like Christina, Michelle and Cassidy," Jonkins said. "I feel honored that their parents and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) has trusted me to train these three on a daily basis. Some of the leg and core work we do would put the biggest of football players to shame."

After diving and graduating from Indiana, Loukas reached the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. She is training diligently to get back in 2012.

"Just making the Olympics was an accomplishment in itself," she said. "The moment I will never forget is when we were in the tunnel getting ready to hit the stadium during the opening ceremonies. All of the athletes were chanting 'U-S-A, U-S-A.' It was amazing and I want to get back to the next games."