

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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Lilly King

Media Conference



U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS



Yeah, it works and we take pride in that. I think that's what I definitely attribute to my success and the consistency as well.

Q. Curious when you look at what happened tonight, and think back a few years ago, how fickle or interesting your sport can be, right, because of course you're thrilled, and I'm thinking of Lydia Jacoby, third, she wins the Gold Medal, I know that was not your greatest day when you did not win the Gold and now she's third and is not in the event. Could you speak to that, just how dramatic and maybe even gut-wrenching, heart-wrenching that it can be when you look at someone like Lydia, even though you're obviously having one of the fine performances of your career?

LILLY KING: Yeah, my heart absolutely breaks for her. That's what this meet. Is I like to tell people that the key they can check to this meet is don't get too high and don't get too low, and you know, emotionally invested as I am in Lydia it's really really hard to watch and kind of move forward from that.

But on the flipside, what a performance from Emma Weber and that's just kind of how this meet rolls. It will make your career and break your career in a minute. It's the hardest meet in the world. It's a lot harder than the Olympics in my opinion. I hope she can move forward from this, and I'm rooting for her always.

Q. Congrats on making your third straight Olympic Team. It seems death, taxes and Lilly King dominating the 100 breaststroke are the only certainties in life. What about your training specifically do you attribute the most to the consistency and sustained excellence we've seen from you in the 100 and the 200?

LILLY KING: In terms of the consistency, I've been doing pretty much the same thing for nine years. So that's one thing. The training has really not changed that much.

You know, at IU, we pride ourselves on the work that we put in at practice and we may do a lot more yards than other programs, but we had three people make the team tonight or probably will make the team in a couple days.

Q. Three different Olympic teams, three different sidekicks going with you in that event. Where does it come from for you to always kind of rise to the occasion in what you described as the hardest meet in the world?

LILLY KING: As semis last night, I was going in very, very confident, and all day I was probably the most calm I've ever been before that final. And probably 30 minutes before we dove in, I was freaking out.

So you know, it still affects me, the pressure is still there for this meet, but yeah, it's a crazy meet, obviously, and I think just I had just a really special moment tonight. I think I basked in it a little bit more than I have in the past just being here in Indy and also with it being my last Trials. So it was just a great night overall.

Q. In Tokyo, you were swimming the 100 breast alongside Lydia Jacoby, a first-time Olympian. This time around, you're likely going to be with Emma Weber, who is also going to be a first-time Olympian. Can you talk about growing into that leader mentor role in the 100 breast for an American woman?

LILLY KING: Yeah, honestly I just want somebody to talk to in the ready room. That's kind of that person I try to be, and if somebody wants to be serious, then that's not really how I roll any more in the ready room.

But I think it's always kind of cool to have a new sidekick and see how it works. Obviously I feel like Lydia kind of my comfort person at this point. But yeah, it was such an awesome swim from Emma, and I don't know her very well. But I'm excited to get to know her and have some good races.

Q. You're talking about training the same events for nine years. How do you continue to motivate yourself and continue to work on something, especially when it's a very specific stroke over and over and over over such a long period of time?

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LILLY KING: I think always for me just at this point in my career I've done everything I've ever wanted to do. It's just striving to be the best version of myself that I can be and that's kind of where I was going for tonight but tonight is just like don't mess up. When you really get down to it, it's don't mess up, swim a smart race and see what happens.

Yeah, it is quite monotonous but swimmers, we spend most of our lives staring at a blue line, so we get used to it.

Q. That was part of the question I was going to ask. Who did you hug? Was that your parents?

LILLY KING: Yeah, my family.

Q. Can I just ask you, obviously now that you're going to the Olympics again, you've never been shy about expressing your opinions. Now that you're obviously there, a lot of us are going to be coming to you for the Chinese and what's going on with all of that. I presume you're ready for that and you'll speak your mind bluntly and how you feel about things going forward?

LILLY KING: I've never not answered a question, so it will be the same going forward.

Q. Just along those lines, you've been a prominent face in U.S. Swimming for a long time. You've also spoken out on issues that matter to you like clean sport. How do you deal with the pressures that come from being a prominent figure in the sport and still be able to perform despite some of those potential pressures?

LILLY KING: I think in terms of speaking out about issues that may arise. It's very separate for me. Like that's not going to interfere with my swimming. I'm very confident in my opinions on those and that they are not opinion; it's fact.

So it doesn't -- there's really never any cross over for me. But yeah, as far as the pressures of swimming fast, it's always going to be there. I feel like no different than it was in 2016.

So yeah, I just kind of take that pressure and role with it. There's not really anything you can do. It's always going to be there. Just like tonight, you know, third Olympic Trials, 100 breast. I'm probably going to make it. I'm still freaking out. That pressure is always going to be there and it's just something we have to learn to deal with.

Q. Swerving directions a little bit but having been part of an Olympics that was not in a pandemic and one

that was, now heading back into slightly more normal waters, what are you most looking forward to about Paris and the experience and something that you didn't get to take part in in Tokyo?

LILLY KING: Yeah, great question. I think everyone that was in Tokyo that wasn't a rookie in Tokyo will acknowledge that it was weird. I feel like in Rio, I was such a newbie that I didn't really just embrace the experience. I was kind of like, okay, get ready to go, get ready to race, deal with all these things. I don't think I really took time to appreciate how special it was. So I think definitely that's something I'm looking forward to.

I'm really looking forward to having a crowd again. That's probably the thing I'm going to embrace most, I think.

Q. Obviously this is a hometown meet for you but it's a hometown meet for a lot of people. Everybody is performing. Your teammates are performing, the Carmel swimmers are performing. First-time Notre Dame male swimmer on the Olympic Team. What does it mean to you to see your state show out like this in your stadium?

LILLY KING: This is what we do. Like obviously I have a rooting interest, but I'd go to high school state every year and see kids drop fastest time in the country every year, every single year, and I don't think it is something that is always acknowledged.

You know, we think of, Oh, California, Texas, like the big states, they are good at swimming. But we are not just good at basketball here. We are good at swimming, too.

I think it's been really cool to see all the Indiana kids and the kids with Indiana ties -- adults -- sorry, not all of them are kids. But all the swimmers that have Indiana ties swimming fast here because we are so used to swimming fast here, it's been easy, and the crowd has been making that happen, too.

Q. Realizing you may be processing you're still going to Paris, but to what extent is L.A. on your radar? Are you in this all the way to the next games as well?

LILLY KING: Nope. I will not be competing in L.A. I am going to watch and have fun.

Q. I'm wondering if you can just compare and contrast like your mindset going into 2021 with your mindset now and just like how you approach a race. Has that changed and did 2021 specifically change you, losing a streak?

LILLY KING: Yeah. My confidence took a major, major hit and I'm still working to build that now to say I'm at the confidence level I was in 2021 would be just a flat out lie. But yeah, that's been something that I have probably had to work the hardest since 2021 getting back to that whatever monster version of little that I walks out before the race.

I would say going into 2021, I pretty much felt invincible. Going into 2016, I felt pretty much invincible. That was not necessarily the case tonight. I think it's also just learning how to race with the heat a little bit. Tonight I could have taken it out a lot faster but I've so many 100 breast strokes that have gone wrong the last 15 meters, I didn't want to do that tonight.

I think just learning from those experiences, a lot of bad races over the last three years, kind of helped me get that win tonight even though the time might not have been super fast.

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