

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Lucas Oil Stadium

Katie Ledecky

Media Conference

Q. Katie, congratulations on the win. After the race, you said you weren't super happy with the performance and thought you were going to be faster. What specifically did you think you could do better tonight?

KATIE LEDECKY: I was just expecting to go a lot faster. The 39 yesterday felt really easy, so I think that just set my expectations pretty high.

Coach Nesty always says not to get greedy, so I'm not going to get greedy and be too upset about it. I got the job done and swam a consistent race. It's not like I completely died or anything. So held it together. Can take some positives away but definitely have some things I want to do better in five weeks, whatever amount of time we have.

Q. I want to ask you about Simone. I know you're not with her day to day anymore, but you go back a while with her. What did it mean to you to see her qualify after everything she's been through? Can you give us some perspective on the journey that she's been on?

KATIE LEDECKY: Yeah, it was great to see that. I was in the ready room when she was being interviewed and everything during the awards, so I didn't get to hear everything that she said. Obviously it meant a lot to her.

She's been on these teams for so many years, so she'll be a great presence this summer and a big factor on those relays. Yeah, just a great person and someone you love to see do well like she did tonight.

Q. Apologies if this is a silly question, but Bobby was in here earlier, and he was talking about how he does taper for qualifying meets. I was curious what your strategy is. Do you always taper for a qualifying meet or not? Sort of what goes into that? Has that changed over the years?

KATIE LEDECKY: Yeah, I do. If you don't for Olympic Trials, you're silly. You can't have any regrets. Yeah, we



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rest. Over the past few years, I've responded really well to the rest at Florida and kind of our plan with the Trials meet and then following it up with Worlds or in this case the Games.

Yeah, I'm excited to hopefully get some good work in after this and then rest again and take that next step.

Q. You've talked a little bit about how you've made adjustments to your stroke to lengthen out your stroke. Can you talk about the changes that Anthony has helped you make, when they started, when did they fully take, and what those changes were and how you're feeling with your freestyle technique.

KATIE LEDECKY: Yeah, I think I got a little sloppy tonight. Yeah, just trying to swim really efficiently. You probably didn't see much of a kick today, but I'm working on it.

Just continuing to try to swim with a good, efficient stroke. It's obviously a stroke that I can hold. Again, I was locked into those 31 splits today and yesterday.

Yeah, I think I just am comfortable with my stroke and happy with my stroke and how it feels in the water, especially with that rest like the last month. I've had very few days where I've felt like my stroke has been off.

It's just a great feeling when you feel everything starting to come together. Hopefully I can carry that through my last two races and into Paris.

Q. There's been two attendance records set this week. How do you think this venue this week has been able to push swimming to a new national and larger audience?

KATIE LEDECKY: It's been awesome. I think it blew away all of our expectations. I think just walking in the first day it was incredible to see how it came together. Once it filled up with people, it made us all even happier. It's just really neat to walk out of that tunnel every night for finals or even for prelims races and hear the excitement that everyone has. To see little kids in the stands with posters and big smiles and cheering really loud, I mean, that's what it's all about.

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It's really neat that we're chasing our dreams and pursuing these big goals, and just as a by-product of that, we're inspiring some of these little kids. I'm sure many of them will be at future Olympic Trials, and that's really exciting.

Q. Katie, you said it at the start that you didn't completely die. What did happen that left you dissatisfied and that you can fix? And how much effort do you want to put into that because in the 1500 you are sort of swimming against yourself, and there may be more head-to-head competition in other races that you can also spend time on.

KATIE LEDECKY: Yeah, I've been faster the last two years. It's just I know I have a lot more in me than the end result today. That's all I was disappointed with.

As I said, I did a good job holding my splits. I just didn't have that next gear that I would have wanted to have. But there are definitely some things I can do better that I spotted right away when I looked at the splits. So I'll make those adjustments. Again, I just need to, after this week, get back to work and get ready for all of my events, as you said.

I care a lot about the 800 and the 1500, and then the 400 is a great race. I want to be right in there, and same with that relay. I know how to train for all those events. Everything we do has a purpose. Every training set we do has a purpose. So I feel very confident in my training and my training group and my coaches that I'll be ready for the 200 through the 1500 in Paris.

Q. You've obviously been swimming in the same group as Caeleb Dressel for the past few years now. You've gotten to know him. You've known him a really long time as it is. He's on his third Olympic team, and he did it with a big smile. What did that mean for you to see that, knowing what he's been through, seeing how he's matured, becoming a father, coming back to swimming over the past few years, what was that like for you to see?

KATIE LEDECKY: Yeah, it's great. I think he's always had that smile, but I think everyone knows that he took that time away. When he came back, he just, he's had that smile every day. Just to see his progression over this past year, how he's just gotten better and better each meet.

He seems to just be loving this racing, and he loves the training probably more than the racing and makes everyone around him better, whether that's his Florida teammates, including me. I mean, I'm a distance swimmer. We don't do main sets together, but sometimes we have warmup together. We all get to the pool early. We all live

on Gator time, which I learned very early it means you get to the pool deck 20, 30 minutes before practice, and we usually start about 10 minutes early.

Yeah, we all love to just sit around and chat, or the boys play games either like four square or recently they like do head -- like volleying, like they hit the ball off their head and see how many they can do. It's very entertaining to watch. They just keep it so light. Caeleb keeps it so light. That has an effect even on the distance swimmers.

He's an integral part of our Florida group and part of Team USA. It was great to watch that tonight, the smile that he had on his face before the race and then after as well.

Q. In your book you talk about the impacts of different coaches. I'm wondering, as you talk about the 800 and the mile being so important over the course of your career, you've had different coaches help you through different periods of that in an Olympic prep. How have they adjusted an event that you love and have a lot of skill for, like each cycle?

KATIE LEDECKY: Each cycle has been different. Of course London and Rio, the 800 was the longest event on the program. So I swam the 1500 at World Championship meets and things like that, but my training was definitely geared toward the 400, 800, and then I could go in either direction.

Then the 1500 was added in Tokyo, and then I wanted to train kind of that range. So we had to try to manage all of that. Now I've just kind of adjusted to what I want to do with the 800 and the 1500 and the 400 and being on that relay.

Yeah, I'm just very appreciative of each of my coaches and the perspective they've given me and the work that they've put in with me to maintain the ability to compete in both the 200 and the 1500.

It's definitely been a learning process, and it's changed as I've gotten older. There's different things I've learned about myself, about my training, about my nutrition, about my recovery, all those things that come into play. So it's definitely not just one factor that we're focused on at any given time. Even across the season there are ups and downs.

Certainly Coach Nesty has been great about helping me manage those ups and downs and always staying focused on the next event, the next step that we want to take. Of course I have great training partners right now that push me. I was hoping to set a little higher bar for the milers in a couple days, some of the boys, but it's all in good fun, and

we push each other a lot.

I love where I'm at. Even though I wanted to be a little faster today, I just look back, and I'm so appreciative of this journey and each step along the way that I'm taking.

Q. We know we're in the hometown of the Fever. We know that they were here a couple nights ago. Did you know they were coming? Did you get to meet any of the team members? Specifically, did you get to talk to Caitlin Clark? Finally, can you talk about your perspective of the evolution or revolution of women in sport that Caitlin is certainly a part of and you have been for so long?

KATIE LEDECKY: I've been pretty busy over the last couple days, and I had last night off. So I was not here when they came. I was back at the hotel resting and watching a session on TV. So I was not here. It was really nice they came out to support the swimming event and looked like they had a great time. So that's great as well.

Pretty cool that -- I mean, they had a game right down the road at 7:00 tonight, and we had the swim meet virtually the same time. I'm sure they were soldout as well. It's amazing we were able to get the attendance we were able to get tonight.

It's great to be a part of an exciting time in women's sports, and Caitlin is obviously drawing a lot of attention. There's the WNBA and college basketball and college sports in general and now the Olympics. I think there are a lot of great female athletes on Team USA, and we want to do our part and make everyone proud back home when we're in Paris.

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