

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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Lucas Oil Stadium

Jack Alexy

Hunter Armstrong

Chris Guiliano

Media Conference



U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS



done specifically to both be a good sprinter and mid-distance swimmer?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Yeah, I'll be honest, I didn't really know this was like a stat or something like that coming into the meet. I just try to get up there behind the blocks and do my best in everything.

But specifically coming into the meet, I feel like I've just really been focusing on like the 100 and stuff, focusing on the back half.

But preparation, you know, something my dad always tells me is like failing to prepare is preparing to fail. So just being able to go in there and execute and learn from my mistakes in races, it's just -- that's really what put me in this place.

Q. This is for all of you. Some of the other women and men on the team have talked about working with sports psychologists and confidence coaches, attacking the mental side of this because swimming can be a tough isolating sport where you have one opportunity every year to go best times, in theory. Do any of you work with sports psychologists, and have you found any benefit from doing that?

JACK ALEXY: Personally I'm not working with any sports psychologists or counselors or anything like that. I took that upon myself because I truly believe it's a huge part of success in this sport especially because swimming is very unique.

You said preparing for one moment. You know, it could be 21 seconds, 47 seconds, and you're preparing for about six months for that one moment.

So I kind of took it in my own hands and started journaling a year and a half to go to get my thoughts out on paper and kind of just analyze my preparation process and what I'm doing in and out of the pool, and that kind of set me up for success for the past two years.

And I think swimming is very -- just like a really unique sport and you can get really penalty and physical drained really quickly. So I think it's important to check on the mental side, just as importantly as the physical side.

Q. We had the chance to talk to Caeleb a few minutes ago and he was talking about how his perspective has changed specifically watching you guys come up and kind of take the reins when it comes to freestyle for USA Swimming. What is it like to be able to now call him a teammate, and then also have him really encourage you guys as you're racing side-by-side?

JACK ALEXY: It's awesome. I mean, I looked up at Caeleb since he first made the team in 2016 and he has been heading the charge for men's U.S. Sprinting for the past couple years, and it's really special being on the same Olympic Team with someone I looked up to for so many years, and I'm just really excited to race with him and relay with him in Paris.

HUNTER ARMSTRONG: I think every sprinter in the United States, and maybe even the world, has looked up to Caeleb.

When I made my debut in '21, we were doing our, like, behind the curtain, setting up for the big reveal, and he walked by me. I'm just like, "Hey, Caeleb."

He's like, "Hey, Hunter, nice swim." And I had my little fan boy moment where I'm like, "Caeleb Dressel knows who I am. It's incredibly special to share a relay with a legend like that."

CHRIS GUILIANO: Caeleb, he's such a true inspiration. I love everything that he represents and everything that he's about. To be able to be on a team with Caeleb and these other guys here, it's an honor.

Q. Chris, you're the first American male since Matt Biondi to qualify individually for an Olympics in the 50, 100 and 200 free. Was this a goal for you to qualify in all three events, and what kind of training have you

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CHRIS GUILIANO: No, I have not seen a sport psychologist. But just being able to come in -- like my love for the sport has grown everyday since coming to college, and I contribute that to the guys and girls on our squad at Notre Dame.

HUNTER ARMSTRONG: I have. And I want to take this opportunity to really talk about Jack a little bit.

This has been one of the hardest years of my life. Just so much has happened and I've gone through so much, and there was a pretty lengthy period of time where I was missing practices and sleeping anywhere from 12 to 16 hours a day.

And I texted Jack because it had become noticeable that I was missing practices and so I had told him that I was going to go to the pool later and make up the practice that I missed and he showed up after classes. He had already done his practice. He showed up just so I didn't have to swim alone. So Jack is truly one of my best friends, and so this relay is so special to me because I get to share it with all of these guys.

But yeah, sports psych, I do use it, but it's also really cool to have amazing teammates.

Q. You had talked about how your teammates have helped grow your love of the sport. Can you speak to what it was like to have them here on Wednesday and cheering for you and the loud Irish wave when you came out?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Yeah, it doesn't get old. It's a different kind of emotion every single time, and to see their support, to see them come down and really show out, it means the world to me.

Q. Chris, I want to ask, what were your expectations reasonably coming into this meet? Because obviously you were 1:48 in the 200 free. You had a good 100, and your 50 I don't think was at this level, either. Obviously you expect to swim well and go best times, but were you expecting this kind of success even time-wise?

CHRIS GUILIANO: I think. So I couldn't really capture what it would take time-wise but I said to my coaches a couple times, like why not, let's go three for three. Why not try to go win all of them?

So I mean, that's just kind of like the mindset I have going into these meets.

Q. Chris, arguably you're going to have one of the biggest and perhaps toughest programs. Have you and Coach Kris talked about how much you're going to have to juggle and how much like Michael Phelps you're going to be at these games?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Let's not get to that level right now. I think we'll definitely discuss that in the coming days.

Q. Are you ready?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Absolutely. I'm ready for the challenge. Just have to level up here in five weeks or whatever. I can't wait. I'm excited for the challenge.

Q. When you visualize Paris, the weight of the fact that your Olympics dreams come true in a city like that, what's the first thing that comes to your mind?

JACK ALEXY: For me, probably the opening ceremony that's going to be happening besides the teams, the pictures, it's going to be on this pretty big river. I've watched opening ceremonies before and it's such a special moment.

For me, it's one of the first thing I realized, I'm going to be part of that moment, not just for Team USA but for international sports.

Q. Hunter, previously you opened up about how this year was one of the hardest years of your life and you went through a slump. Can you talk about your process of getting out of that?

HUNTER ARMSTRONG: So yeah, I've been working with the USA Swimming staff. They provide sports psychiatrists for us.

But truly outside of that, you have to surround yourself with good people. When I sort of came out and expressed that I was struggling to my teammates and my coaches, they truly rallied around me.

And so I may never actually be a Bear but you know, they are my family.

Q. And Jack, can you give me your perspective on just being there for Hunter and helping him?

JACK ALEXY: Yeah, of course. I think seeing Hunter train every single day, and being by his side for the past like year and a half, two years, I've learned that he is probably the most unique swimmer out there and unique -- most talented swimmer out there. He does things in practice that I'm just like, How the hell are you doing that? It's

inspiring. It pushes me every day.

After he did that, he missed a start in that semifinal in the 100 back. I was -- that was one of the most impressive things I've seen.

And I think I kind of related to him after I kind of messed up my start in semifinals at worlds. I think he kind of got the upper edge on me in that.

Hunter, he didn't come -- he has not been -- he didn't swim for Cal collegiately. And he just said, he's not a Bear but to me he's a Bear. He's my teammate at Cal and my teammate on the Olympic Team, and I'm looking forward to compete with him.

Q. A few days ago, there was a sweet video I put out of Nathan Adrian reading a specific message to you. What does it mean to be a part of that legacy of the Cal Bears and the 100 freestyle, and to now qualify for the Olympic Team individually a few Olympics after he did?

JACK ALEXY: It's truly amazing. Nathan has been a huge mentor in my life, a great friend and just great person to me.

I remember in 2021 at Olympic Trials, I raced him in the semifinals and after the race he congratulated me; he welcomed me to the team at Cal. I didn't get a chance to actually train with him but seeing the path that he's paved for not just me but future Cal sprinters, and thinking about Matt, Anthony Ervin, the people that have come before me at Cal, their success, not only at Cal but on an international stage for Team USA is truly inspiring.

To me just being mentioned in the same sentence as those legends is amazing. I'm looking forward to going out there and making them proud and hopefully inspiring some other future Cal sprinters.

Q. Hunter, at risk of sounding creepy, I saw you have a moment in the Steak 'n Shake a couple nights ago where you were incognito and they called your name and you got mobbed by all these little kids. That has to be a unique experience. I don't know if that's ever happened before. Can you talk about what that's like, you come to Indy and see your face on posters and you're a quasi-celebrity here, as opposed to coming into the Tokyo Trials where everything in the world was so different and you come in as more of this underdog unknown. What's that been like?

HUNTER ARMSTRONG: It's taken some adjusting. I'm not used to being recognized. Even though I don't really

blend in that much.

But I just -- I think it was after the 100 back or maybe the 100 free semi, and so I wanted Steak 'n Shake. So I went and I got some burgers and a milkshake and somehow, got recognized.

So I ended up signing autographs and taking pictures inside of a Steak 'n Shake.

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