

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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Lucas Oil Stadium

Shaine Casas Regan Smith Carson Foster Media Conference

Q. Shaine, first off, as a Palestinian, I love seeing some Arabic on your shirt.

SHAINÉ CASAS: I don't know what it says but I thought it was cool.

Q. Talk to me about your mindset right when you touched the wall and the emotions you were feeling, and almost the sense of relief that it seemed like you had when you realized that you had made the team?

SHAINÉ CASAS: You hit it right on. It was relief. I played that race in my head and I've dreamt about it. I've visualized what that moment would be like, and I was kind of emotional because it was a lot to take in.

That swim represented my entire life's work and everyone who supports me and who has helped me get to this point. That was a physical representation of that, and I was so excited, so happy, so relieved. I don't really know how I could describe it, you know, besides just a plethora of emotions.

Q. This has been kind of a good week for you, I'm guessing. How do you come down from this and move on to the bigger goal in five-ish weeks?

REGAN SMITH: I want to take the rest of this meet to be really proud of my accomplishments and soak it with in with my family and friend and teammates. Like you said, the job isn't done, and it's back to work immediately. Probably Sunday I'll be back in the gym getting started.

So yeah, I think it's just compartmentalizing, being so proud of everything I accomplished this weekend, but also understanding that this isn't the end of the road and kind of getting my mindset back to where it needs to be in a few days. I'm definitely going to soak it in over the next 48



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hours or so.

Q. Jake. I might have a second part, but the first part is going to be you talking about your brother. Could you offer us some comments about how important he was in your career?

CARSON FOSTER: Yeah, definitely. Two nights ago, it was an incredibly emotional night for my entire family. I think obviously with Jake being so close and for multiple years, now, of making the international team and just grieving with him over not reaching his goal for this meet. But then also just that was it for his career, which is hard for me because it started with me, my brother and my sister in this sport.

So from this meet on, it's going to be just me. You know, I would not have swam if it wasn't for them. Like it was the main reason why I wanted to swim so I could be with them and Jake's the reason I didn't choose to go to Texas so I could continue to swim with him.

And obviously the coaches and the team were a huge part of that, but I was going to go wherever Jake went because I knew I wanted to swim with him.

Definitely a super emotional night the other night, and I think still probably this next week, but I could not be more excited. He sent me his schedule for med school on Monday, and he was setting up his monitor and his laptop and everything back at home. So that made me real really excited for him.

I'm excited to get back to Austin so celebrate the end of his career but also this very exciting new journey of him becoming a doctor.

Q. Could you talk about your race and how you closed so strong?

CARSON FOSTER: Yes, that was definitely the plan. I didn't know Shaine was going to go off 52. That was not part of my plan. I was talking to Eddie and Wyatt. I was just like, I'm going to take it out in the semis. My legs didn't feel great and I was a little frustrated. And tonight I was going to take it out smoother which I thought I was doing because I was looking over at Shaine.

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Then just that last 75, I was like, all right, this is where I go, and I just started trying to build that third 50. And then the last 50, just tried to swim it like I was swimming the 200 freestyle.

Closed well and happy to finally go best time.

Q. You spoke eloquently last year at Nationals, at the Trials, about the mental health aspect of this, the pressure that of course all of you face. Then everyone is expecting so much from you, and you expect a lot from yourself, and then you have a fantastic meet. Could you put into words the perspective of how you have handled the pressure and all of the burden, expectations, whatever, and turned it into something to great in the pool?

REGAN SMITH: I think the key to it is ignoring it, honestly, and realizing that external pressures have no impact on you.

You know, like the only -- the only opinion that you should care about is your own and your coach's. And I struggled with that for years and years and years, and that's why I missed the team in the 2-back in '21.

So now to fight back and make the team in the 2-back, seven years after making my first international team in the 200 backstroke means a lot to me, but yeah, I think it comes down to blocking it all out. Because nobody knows what's going on in your day-to-day life and what you're going through. People always are going to have an opinion, and that's just like human nature.

But it's just about ignoring it and focusing on what you can control and what you know that you're capable of.

I think that's always going to be a work-in-progress for me. I've made a lot of strides forward that I can see, and that's what matters to me.

Q. Shaine, you had a lot of options of events you could have swam at this meet. Could you take us through the process of how you narrowed that down and ultimately what you chose to swim and your thoughts on that decision?

SHAINE CASAS: Yeah, I'm kind of versatile, and I like to swim everything. It's really entertaining and fun and interesting to go PV in a freestyle event and then do butterfly and that's something I always want to continue to do.

But it's gotten increasingly harder to match that calibre in

certain events, and at this level, if you're not on your A Game, you will not make the team in any way, shape or form.

You know, I have struggled with that, and you know, it's pretty evident because it right there. You know, the time says if you are doing well or not. The meet did not start great. You know, I thought I was going to have a pretty good 100 back, and it turned out it wasn't. I was like, all right, we're doing this again.

This time I had that confidence that, you know, I've had a poor meet before or a swim that was kind of out of the ordinary in a bad way, I knew that if I just locked in and belief in myself and just really tuned out everyone and everything, that I could get it done again.

That swim surprised me in a good way. I knew that I had the physical ability to put myself on that team. I think everyone knew that, and a lot of people believed in myself and supported me. But I think the most important was that whenever I made the decision that I can do this, to just go for it.

Before that race, I couldn't really feel anything. I was super numb. I wasn't even thinking. I was just listening to music and I was just jamming out, like this is insane. I might have texted 30 people, like this is the craziest day of my life. Because if you know what it is, like this is my life's work right here. It all comes down to this race.

You know, from the moment that race started, I just went. I kind of might have deviated from the strategy that might have produced a little bit better of a time but I didn't care. I was going to give it my 100 percent best and I was content with whatever time and place was on that board. If I missed the team, I would still be proud of who I am and how far I've come and the obstacles I've faced and overcome.

But I'm overjoyed that I'm an Olympian now.

Q. You've talked about the 100 fly earlier in the week. Do you think the way you processed that this week was the way you would have processed it two or three years ago, and have you seen any changes in the way you get over a swim like that?

REGAN SMITH: The 100 fly or the 200 backstroke? What do you mean? Can you, like, elaborate?

Q. Yeah. Obviously that final is difficult and not making?

REGAN SMITH: Oh, not at all. Not at all. I did not think I

was going to make the team in that event whatsoever.

I thought Torri and Gretchen were such a lock, and coming into this season, I was a 56:6. And then I had a meet in March, I was 56:3. I was like, okay, saw some, maybe I'm in the conversation but Torri has been so consistent for years and Gretchen is, I think, having the year of her life.

My prelim swim I felt really great about. By semi swim I broke 56 and went 55, and I was over the moon. I still didn't think I had a real shot. So I was going to go into the final and see what time I could put up and see how much I could push Torri and Gretchen, and I think I did just that.

And I went 55:6, and I am so proud of that. And I hate the narrative of being like, oh, my gosh, you must be so frustrated because you got third place, and I'm not, and I want to be so clear about that. 55:6 is something that I deserve to be so proud of, and I was never planning on swimming that event in Paris. I never thought that I had a shot. If I had squeaked in for second, absolutely, but it was never part of my original plan. So I don't want that to be misconstrued at all.

Q. So maybe in a slightly similar vein, just in terms of the confidence side of things and I know this is I think for all of you, I don't know, Shaine, if you met with a confidence coach but Carson and Regan, you've spoke about that. Can you walk us through the process of deciding how that that would help and you when you started seeing the benefits, and when it clicked that it might be something that could take your swimming to the next level?

CARSON FOSTER: The end of 2021, like I talked about Susannah, she really reached out to -- probably because she had no other way of contacting me, she reached out to my coach, Wyatt, and Wyatt passed it along to me and was really encouraging me to do it. Like I said the other night, I was like, I don't want to do that. Like I'm embarrassed to do that. If I do it, I don't want anyone to know.

Just because at that time, I didn't know anyone who did it and I felt like I was like, why can't I just do this on my own? Why can't I just step up and race like I've seen Phelps do or Lochte do or all these guys, they always seem to just have it. At that point I was like, why don't I just have it in big moments.

So I began to work with her, and that totally changed my career doing the work with her, and so I could not thank her enough.

And then this year, I started working with a guy named Jim Murphy, and he does very similar stuff. Talked the about

confidence, and honestly, it's a lot of perspective stuff over, like, it's very easy to let this rule your life and make it seem like it's all swimming; this is the main thing.

Jim does a great job of incorporating faith into it, which is important to me, and just working with my entire family on how to best support me and like that's been the coolest thing is that he doesn't just work with me. He works with my whole family to say, Hey, this is the way we can best support Carson during these times, during training, especially during these meets. So that's been the best part of it.

REGAN SMITH: I think Carson just hit the nail on the head. I don't want to repeat everything that he said, but I feel very, very similar.

I felt scared at first. I was afraid to ask for help and then I finally did and realized what I had been missing out on for so long and everything kind of went up from there. He said it very well.

SHAINE CASAS: I don't really have any words. I'm completely zoned out. Not going to lie.

Q. The fact that this Olympic dream is coming true in a city like Paris, when you envision images of what lies ahead, just taking the spectacle in, what do you see?

SHAINE CASAS: I think the obvious would be the Eiffel Tower. I don't really know. I mean, I've had on my lock screen, Paris and the Eiffel Tower and all that logo for over a year because I wanted to get that ingrained in my brain.

Now that it's kind of come true, I'm just, like, shocked. I don't know, I guess I'm excited to see what it will look like.

REGAN SMITH: Yeah, I've never been to France. So I'm really looking forward to that.

My entire family, when I was at an international meet in 2018, I was in Tokyo, my whole family took a trip to Paris, and I wasn't there.

So I'm really excited now to have the opportunity to go myself. I just think it will be fun.

CARSON FOSTER: My whole family is going, except Jake in med school. He loves school. He'll enjoy that.

But yeah, honestly thing that I've been most excited about since making the team is thinking through, like, all right, I get to swim the 4-IM against the world record holder in his home country. Like, that atmosphere is going to be probably electric, and to be able to like get to be a part of

that, and I know they are going to be cheering for him. Like the cheers aren't for me. But to be able to experience that and hopefully be in a lane right next to him and get to race with him is going to be really cool. So.

That's what I'm most looking forward to.

Q. Obviously you've talked a lot about feeling more confident in yourself, and it's shown, obviously in your results here, especially in the 100s at the start of the week. Why do you now feel more prepared physically, mentally, to race Kaylee McEwen in a way that maybe you haven't in the past, certainly in Tokyo and even last year?

REGAN SMITH: I'd say just continuing to train under Bob, like absolutely, and now Erik Posegay, too. I think the combination of those two has just made me feel so, so much better physically and mentally. I love his practices, both of their practices. They are very similar.

So I'll kind of talk about them as one entity, because they kind of have the same brain sometimes. But they just know what they are doing a hundred percent.

I love what I do under them. They make swimming fun. It's serious but it's so fun at the same time. I walk into practice every day really excited, and always fired up, and I never feel like I've ever really hit a big burnout being coached by them. And so I think I'm going into this summer, I think the biggest change versus years past, and last year I think I felt relatively similar. But I think just continue to go build on my team being under Bob and Erik, because now I have two years under my belt instead of just one.

I think I just have more excitement coming into everything. I think for a long time, I viewed swimming as like a job and it was like a business trip. I think there's a time and a place for that. Like yes, I have a job to do but at the same time, this is just fun, and thank God it's a sport. This isn't life or death.

So I just want to lean into the fun side a hundred percent, and I think that just makes it a lot easier to go out there and, like, rip and give your best effort every single time. And I know Kaylee will.

So I just think it will be a lot of fun. I say "fun" a lot but I mean it this time. I'm looking forward to it.

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