

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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Lucas Oil Stadium

Phoebe Bacon Media Conference

Q. I want to read this to you. This is what you said after NAAs: "Pretty special to win a national title especially with how my career went the last time I won a national title. This summer should be looking pretty good." Mission accomplished, I guess, or at least the first part of that. Can you take us through the parallels, the confidence of winning the NAAs, and also what was it that wasn't quite there in the years in between?

PHOEBE BACON: Yeah, gosh, I think really just the years in between, it wasn't a fault to my training or my mental preparation to it. I really think it was just some of the competitors that I had were just a little bit faster those years.

But really, I think coming -- just being able to come together my first NAAs and then this last NAAs more as a team, I think I was able to lean more on the team and see their successes and have them lean into my successes and have that better of a culture. I feel like that helped propel me to winning that NCAA title.

Whereas the other years, again, it wasn't anything specific. But sometimes I do get a little bit in my own head, and I don't like to be that way. I've always loved team sports and swimming obviously is a team sport but it can sometimes become very individualized.

So trying to stay away from seeing the individual part of swimming. It's hard for me but I think I was able to ultimately find my way back to the team.

Q. Do you feel like you've had that team aspect this week, and especially tonight with the big final?

PHOEBE BACON: Yeah, absolutely. So coming to this meet, I think just only three weeks ago, there was 16 of us qualified which already kind of blew my mind with how many was qualified for UW.

And then in the last weekend possible, we had two more



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qualifiers. We had another kid that's coming in next year qualify. So we ended up going with 18 swimmers, and to be a part of that 18 was just mind-blowing to me. I remember my Trials back in 2021. I think we had six or seven of us down on deck.

So to go from that to 18 was unimaginable. And everybody throughout the week swam well. Cheered well. Every time -- you guys probably heard it, but every time you walked out of that tunnel, you saw the wave of Wisconsin over in the athlete's section and I mean, for me, I got to turn around, and up in the stands, a whole other wave of Wisconsin people. It's just so much fun to be able to see them when you walk out as well as cheer them on when they were swimming.

I think Trials is such a special moment, especially for people who have never been here. We have a lot of first-time trial swimmers, and like it almost made me like emotional of getting to see them walk out and have like Olympic trial swim for the first time ever.

Q. Can you talk about how it feels competing against -- obviously US backstroke on men's and women's is a little bit deep, there's a little bit of talent. Talk about what it means for you to have composure to know that you can close well and finish well to get your hand on the wall to make the team?

PHOEBE BACON: Yeah, obviously United States backstroke is no joke. We are all amazing competitors, and we are also all really good friends. I think just when I go into a heat knowing that anybody from Lane 1 to Lane 8 could totally get their hand on the wall in front of me, I think you just have to step back and believe in your own self and your own training.

You can't control somebody else. You can't control somebody else's race. None of that is possible. But what you can do and what I just really have to know to fall back on and think of is, I can control my own race. I can't control the outcome or the time but I can control what I'm doing in the water and how hard I'm working and where I'm pushing it while racing them.

Q. Touching the wall, a big moment when you made the team. Can you compare how you felt in that

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instant compared to last time?

PHOEBE BACON: Oh, my gosh. I think this one was a little bit more, almost like emotional for me. Not only, I think just one of the big pieces is like the pressure. Like you make an Olympic Team, a lot of people look at you to make another team or to continue on in your success.

So there's a lot of pressure building on it, and then coming off of last year, missing the World's team by a good margin of places, but still, just like I didn't want to leave my swimming in that race. I wanted to come back and be stronger and be better, and that's really what I did here, I feel. And just every time I kind of touch the water, I just felt a little bit more comfortable and a little bit more ready to race, I guess.

Q. We talked to a fellow NCAA champion Brendan Burns before the session tonight and he said Indiana and Wisconsin have a very good relationship, especially within the Big Ten. He picked you to make the team tonight. I'm curious if just seeing other swimmers, Indiana has obviously had a great weekend, I don't know if you paid attention to anyone else on other teams, but Indiana, or really anyone else make the team, if that has an impact on you because you know the 200 back is just so late in the meet?

PHOEBE BACON: Yeah, I love watching -- I mean, obviously I love watching Wisconsin do well.

But I think there is a slight shared enthusiasm and enjoyment in watching just other Big Ten athletes do well at this level.

Another one that I'm rooting for, cheering for the whole week was Megan Van Berkomp. She's been a competitor of mine -- she's from Minnesota. She's been a competitor of mine for of the last couple years but has always been the sweetest and kindest competitor that you can have.

Just watching her do so well like gave me some excitement throughout the meet. But then again that just kind of goes along, too. I think watching other Big Ten swimmers, like, yeah, we compete with each other, but we also have each other's backs in larger stages such as this.

Q. The last 20 or so meters, you really cranked it into another gear. You were behind at that point. Did you know where you stood in that race when you made that move, and is that why you made that move there or is that part of the race strategy?

PHOEBE BACON: Truly I had no idea where I was. I could see Regan to the left of me. I had a feeling she

would probably be out in front of me just given where her times have been compared to mine.

But I had no clue where Claire was. But in my head, I'm a competitor. I don't like to lose. I like to get my hand on the wall. I'm going to do whatever I possibly can to do that and just coming down to that last 20 yards, or 20 meters, I knew it was going to be hard whether Claire was close or Regan was close or whoever it was. I just wanted to get my hand on the wall as fast as I possibly could.

So I cranked it into the next gear and kind of closed my eyes and made it to the wall.

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