

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

Friday, June 14, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Lucas Oil Stadium

Tim Hinchey

Media Conference

Q. I'm assuming given that this meet isn't sold out yet, and there still are tickets to be claimed, how do you anticipate that the atmosphere at Lucas Oil Stadium will be different from what it was in Omaha for these past few Trials?

TIM HINCHEY: It's a great question. I never got to go to a Trials in Omaha that was full. My only experience was, there's two waves that we did back in the COVID days. I don't know, I can't really compare it to anything in terms of that question.

But I am supremely confident that the magnitude of this building; the way this building is run; the way it looks; the excitement; the sound, it's going to be phenomenal. I'm excited. We certainly have sold more tickets in advance than we ever sold in Omaha. So I am super excited for that and grateful for that.

This is our chance to go beyond the swim families that we had in Omaha. We got an extra night. It's nine nights instead of eight. I just think it's going to be great and I think people can see that.

Q. There's another New York Times story about past doping violations or positive tests, I should say, from China. From an institutional standpoint, what is USA Swimming communicating to its membership and athletes that are going to compete here and in Paris?

TIM HINCHEY: We are always going to be steadfastly committed to making sure we have a level playing field for our sport. You know, you saw it, I think they are very strict. They do a great job to make sure in our country; our athletes are tested so often. You heard Elizabeth talk about that. It's always going to be at the forefront and important to us.

I think in this particular case, it's disappointing to have this kind of distraction again around the Olympics, and like Rowdy said, it's happened time and time again, right. So that's disappointing.



U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS



I think that the new folks at World Aquatics care deeply about this issue. I believe in them. I think the new integrity that they put together is an important step towards that. That's new with this new regime.

In terms of our athletes right now, like the coaches said, right now it's about making the team. So we know out here it's going to be a level playing field. We know everyone is going to do that. So I think that's the focus right now is to give them a chance to make the team because there's so much pressure on that alone. And once that happens, I'm sure we'll regroup and talk about what our plans are going into Paris.

Q. We just had two prominent coaches who are going to be the head coaches for this team. There's a lot of college swimmers that feed into the system that excel for USA Swimming. I just wonder, big picture, with so much change happening in college sports, and so much driven by football, men's basketball, just your level of concern or how you view swimming's place in college athletics?

TIM HINCHEY: I'm concerned. I think all of us in the Olympic movement are concerned. You know, the landscape is changing quickly. It's changing so many different sways, especially in the financial side for our athletes, and the other sports and the Power Five and the big sports.

So we're deeply concerned. But I can tell you that we are also interested in leaning into the NCAA. So we have certainly made ourselves available to Charlie (Baker) and to the others to say, how can we help and be a leader in the space; what can we be doing. We have some folks with the Knight Commission here this week talking about some of those potential solutions and ideas on how we as an NGB can support that.

To your point, the college swim system is our secret sauce. Not only do they train our best swimmers to make our Olympic teams but we train our competitors around the world. So it's kind of an interesting dynamic. It's a big concern and something that we are going to monitor and definitely stay involved in.

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Just want to thank you guys all for coming. We greatly appreciate and really excited to be in Indianapolis. We really appreciate this kind of coverage for our sport. So thanks very much.

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