

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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Lucas Oil Stadium

Nic Fink

Media Conference

Q. So you got the Happy Expectant Father's Day. Tell us about the rocking the baby in the pool, and just what it means on Father's Day when you have a baby on the way.

NIC FINK: Yeah, I mean, it's one of those things that really doesn't make sense to me yet is like, you know, Father's Day I feel like is a holiday to celebrate all of the things that fathers have done for their kids.

You know, I feel like I've just been helping Mel out and like so, I don't know. It has not really, like, processed. I feel like I haven't earned it yet. But you know, next one will feel like a real one for sure after diapers and late nights and stuff like that.

Right now, it's kind of for fun.

Q. How far along is she, and do you know if you have a boy or girl?

NIC FINK: Yeah, it's going to be a boy, yeah. It's exciting. So I don't remember the week count right now but she's, I think due in mid-September. So still a little ways.

Q. Can you just tell us about balancing a 9:00 to 5:00 job and what you do?

NIC FINK: Yeah, it's really easy when everyone is kind of on board with what you do and the method you go about doing it. Because Rhode (Greg Rhodenbaugh) and the SMU staff and the kids have been super accommodating and very flexible, and sometimes if work gets in the way of -- work calls, meetings, whatever, I need to come in at a different time, Rhode is there or Keith is there or I'm with Ozzie sometimes.

So it's kind of a group effort I think in the pool. And then obviously in work, they know that I'll get my stuff done, and my hours may be a little different than other people's. I've definitely answered texts, like, Hey, can I get this back to you in like an hour or so?



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And they are like, No rush, you do you. They let me know when things need to get done by and I work around that schedule.

I can't think them enough for giving me that opportunity and something to balance me out. When it comes to the flexibility they have given me, it's been better than I could have hope for and I owe a lot to that.

Q. You sort of answered some of the questions I was going to ask you, but in regards to your wife, you've obviously been through a lot of these meets together with her where maybe there's one disappointment and one happy one. Is this the first Olympic Trials where one has truly been watching both from the stands and you're not both competing? What is that like for you two?

NIC FINK: Yeah, well, that might be I guess a better question for her. I mean, it's great because I know she's always supported me at these meets and been my biggest fan and that's never been in doubt and vice versa. I was always her biggest fan and we were always excited for our successes.

I think we always felt our disappointments, too. I think we did a good job of when we were both competing kind of doing what we had to do, and then I guess compartmentalizing that in a way. But yeah, I know she was -- she's probably more excited than I am about tonight's results, and knowing that, it's really a great feeling and awesome to have someone in the stands who roots for you like that, and it's also cool because she knows what it's like, and you know, it's -- in a sense, yeah, she's here with me every step of the way.

And even on to Paris, she'll be there because she knows kind of what all of the steps are, and I get to share those things with her. It's really cool in that sense.

Q. It's really hard for me to understand how you balance. So can you take us through what a normal week looks like for you with everything you're balancing?

NIC FINK: Yeah. I'd say, so I try to get one or two doubles

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in a week in the pool. So that's, what, six -- with the day off, six, seven or eight workouts a week, and those can range from an hour and a half to two hours. Then I get three weightlifting sessions, and depending on part of the season, we added a little bit of dry land here and there.

When I'm not doing those things, I try to work. I tend to get up pretty early. So if practice is at -- because it can range in the morning from like 6:30 where I would get up and go straight to practice. But if practice is at 8:00, I still get up at 6:30 and I try to work for an hour or so and get things ready before the East Coast people wake up.

Then I come home and work throughout the day. It's really nice because I just reheat lunch and make a quick breakfast. It's pretty streamlined in that I eat at my desk and everything. You know, I go to weights and practice, and then I come home and I try to do some work, too.

You know, I joke that it's a 9:00 to 5:00 when it's actually kind of anything but that in the sense where I have three separate work sessions throughout a day. Yeah, it's definitely, kind of like I said, flexibility-wise, it's been great because they kind of expect me to get stuff done, but not at a certain time or whatever. I try to make as many calls as I can.

I guess that's kind of a typical week. You know, try to get 30 to 40 hours in. So a little less coming into this week but you know, still trying to do as much as I can because they are doing me a solid.

Q. This field looked very different than it did in '21. So I'm wondering, can you take us through your process of prelims and semis, as well as the final of how you navigated things, and where you are at physically and mentally, as well as kind of keeping your eye on where everyone else was at just coming into the final, knowing that maybe the times being put up and the athletes were very different than they were in '21?

NIC FINK: Yeah, yeah, I mean, now that I'm 30, it's rare to see faces that I swam against in 2016. So that, and then 2021, there's always a different group and year by year changes.

Yeah, I'd say coming into it, you ideally want to be good, better, best in your first three and that's something I try to stick to. I had kind of an off swim in the semi. I think I didn't get off the blocks very well, and I tried to make up that ground pretty quickly off the bat and ended up spinning my wheels and stuff like that. I think all the stuff that was happening kind of through prelims and semis, I knew I could adjust and create and get a little better.

I think times are certainly important but at the end of the day it's getting your hand on the wall first so that you can qualify and kind of get the monkey off your back like that.

Yeah, I think you never really know. I think you can kind of guess, make an educated guess on who is going to be in what position and where they are going to be. But you know, it's the Olympic Trials. You're trying to qualify for the Olympic Games. You never really know who is going to qualify. I think we have had enough surprises already in the meet to justify that.

You know, it's not really hyper focusing on any one competitor or two competitors or who might make the team or who might push you. Literally, it's anybody's race, and yeah, I think with as even of a field as it was kind of was going into the final, you kind of had to not take anyone for granted and really respect, I guess, the other breaststrokers in that heat.

Q. Consistency, resiliency, something you're very well-known for in the pool. But you have encountered in the last year and a half incredible changes: Employment status, education, location, coach, training partners. How have you adapted just so well to that?

NIC FINK: Marriage. Can't forget about that one.

It's been a lot of fun, and I think yeah, since '21, I went to school, got engaged, got married, bought a house, sold a house, moved states, new coaches, new training partners.

So it's been a lot of change, and I think the changes, I've been embracing them along the way, and I think after '21, I told myself that life wasn't going to -- or swimming wasn't going to get in the way of life anymore. I really wanted to kind of find a better balance, and I think personal growth and development.

I'm an old man in the sport. I'm 30, and I was ready to start doing these other major things. You know, I think it's really easy to do these changes when you have such a supportive partner, supportive family, and coaches that I used to work with that still reach out, still want to help. I can still ask for advice. You know, because even though I had moved from Georgia Tech to SMU, Rhode, has been great in helping facilitate that change.

But I talk with Mike Norman all the time, and Jack calls me now and then. It's still a collaborative effort, I feel like, and even though it's different faces and different training partners, you bring the same consistency on a daily basis. You know, at the end of the day, nothing really changes.

It's just maybe different workouts or different environments but yeah, at the end of the day, it's just bring your best, doing what you think you need to do from an effort perspective, mentally, physically, emotionally, to get yourself ready for competition, things like that.

I think embracing the changes and not letting them rattle you, kind of roll with the punches in that sense. Maybe that was a bad way of phrasing some of those things.

Q. You've talked about how you were not sure after 2021. Now you're going back to the Olympics as the established Top-100 breaststrokers in the world. What has that meant to have that kind of success in this part of your career that was the bonus, basically?

NIC FINK: I think that's exactly right. I think I really tried to flip a switch in my brain to just think, like, this is icing on the cake. Everything is icing on the cake no matter what happens.

Yeah, I still have goals. Yeah, I still want to accomplish certain things but if I were to retire today that, would be terrible timing.

But if I were to retire today, be happy with what I've accomplished and walk away satisfied, I think that's kind of a healthier mindset for me in particular to kind of approach.

Making my second Olympic Team is great, and I'm really looking forward to it, but yeah, I think I've been able to enjoy the ride, too, and these World Championships and having success there or World Cup, having success there, it's been something I never really thought of that I could accomplish.

So I think kind of being satisfied, and you know, still having a hunger is a good way of kind of approaching it because I feel like hinging all-or-nothing on the Olympics, on Olympic Trials, I kind of -- I think that's what I did in 2016. That was my worst meet.

So you know, I think kind of changing that mindset, flipping the switch to, yeah, it's all icing on the cake is kind of how I think about it.

Q. I understand this is probably not where your mind is at tonight, but I wanted to ask you about the story swirling around with the Chinese swimmers who tested positive for a banned substance, including one in your event. Have you been following that and where is your head at on it, and are you confident your race in Paris is going to be clean?

NIC FINK: Yeah, I almost got out of here before someone

asked me -- it's fine.

Yeah, I've been following it. I think as a member of the committee for USA Swimming, I feel like I take on -- I volunteered to take on some athlete representation. So I try to follow the best I can. Maybe I'm not on top of everything because I'm trying to balance all of that and other responsibilities, like being in the pool, as well.

I think my take on it is USADA has certainly raised a lot of fiery questions and statements about that whole thing, and I don't think they are the only one. I think there was a bunch of other anti-doping agencies that kind of came out and said, and kind of agreeing with what Katie Ledecky was quoted as saying. You know, confidence is not very high in water right now. I think that's certainly justified, and just what I'm hearing from people who know more about it than I do.

You know, I think they are probably trying to do the best they can. I know ITA is testing everybody. I'd imagine that those Chinese swimmers were tested a lot the past couple years. It's just one of those things where it's not about any particular swimmers or anything like that. It's more about the system and stuff like that.

Yeah, I don't know if I have any specific thoughts or anything like that. But I kind of agree with the sentiment going around that things are popping up and it's like, well, that's interesting, or why did that happen. You know, some of the decisions that were made are, you know, certainly questionable.

But yeah, I assume everyone is getting tested kind of going into it, and yeah, I mean, we may not know results for years but it should be -- hopefully it will be clean as we can all hope it would be.

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