

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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Lucas Oil Stadium

Drew Kibler Kieran Smith Chris Guiliano Luke Hobson Media Conference

Q. Drew, this one's for you. Second time around here now, but got to be a little bit different in your hometown. What has this vibe been like for you and what does this mean to you?

DREW KIBLER: I think there's always a level of, you know, pressure and excitement and energy and nervousness that comes with every big meet but it's been really, really cool feeling the energy that has come with, I have a ton of family that rallied and turned this into the biggest family reunion in over a decade which has been super cool. Knowing all the Carmel Club summers and people from over the years, showing support and love, it's been really special.

On top of the intent to perform, it's like it's a reminder. This whole thing we do is really really cool. Just take it in and enjoy the moment. It's helpful to remind me of that being home.

Q. Chris, obviously you had the 100 last year and we saw what you can do during the college season. What changes helped you become so good at the long course 200 and what does this mean for the 100 coming up?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Honestly coming into this meet, I didn't really know what to expect from this race but I think the more that I swim this event, I think the more I get used to it. I think we've seen that throughout the course of this year. I wasn't going like crazy times in season or anything like that but I was figuring out different ways to swim it and really execute.

And for the 100? Oh, yeah, I think it's definitely a great sign for the rest of this meet. I just can't wait. I'm excited



U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS



to keep this thing rolling.

Q. Chris, you're the first male swimmer from Notre Dame to make the U.S. Open Team. What does it mean to you to represent the University of Notre Dame at the Olympic Games?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Coming to the University of Notre Dame is something I always wanted to do. I wanted to cement a legacy at such a special place. I'm just so excited to represent it. And for everything it means, I hope to represent it well. I can't wait.

Q. You've had a banner of a year in the past 12 months after qualifying second at U.S. Nationals last summer, going 47:4 in the 100 free earlier this year. Can you talk about the prelims to semis to the finals of this race, coming in, you were seeded with a 1:48:07 and now to come away with a 1:45:03 what it means to you?

CHRIS GUILIANO: Yeah, I mean, I know my teammates give me a lot for it. They just don't really get it either. But I think again just kind of figuring out different ways to swim it, swimming it. The more I swim it, I mean, I don't -- this is not really an event that I thought but just being able to know the limits of my body. Being able to turn it on and having like cues from the pool, just to know when to execute.

Q. Congratulations, Drew. What has allowed you to stay consistent and motivated in a sport that's so difficult?

DREW KIBLER: That's a great question. I have had a certain level of consistency, and especially changing up the training a lot and trying new places. But again, kind of how I stated earlier, every year, I'm not so sure like what the future holds for my swimming. I get to take it year by year and try my best just to stay present and enjoy the journey, as cliché as that can sound. That makes it easier to work really hard every day and not get tired of it.

I think that as long as you're working hard and enjoying the people you're doing it with, it's not that complicated to be consistent. I've done it with Luke. I've done it on occasion with Kieran, and probably more with Chris coming up. Just

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enjoying your process makes it so easy to work hard and stay consistent.

Q. You were talking about how much you love doing the relays, and you have the experience with it. So what's the secret sauce in making relays work?

KIERAN SMITH: Trust. Laying it on the line for your brothers and your country. Just racing as hard as you can when the pressure is on and when you're in the moment.

Obviously my relay performances usually historically have always over performed to my individual swims. So you know, it's something that's really special to me, and super eager to be representing Team USA for another relay.

Q. You've been said steadily improving. What does this feel like to be the country's best freestyler individually and for that relay?

LUKE HOBSON: It's pretty amazing. If you told me that was going to be the case like as a kid, I would have told you, no way. It's pretty cool and I couldn't be happier to do it with all these guys, and you know, likelier at World's, like Kieran was just saying, the relays were so important.

Last year I didn't have the greatest split but this year I made it kind of my mission the whole year to be consistent and be able to throw down on that relay and put it on the line for this country and for all these guys.

Q. When you are announced to the crowd and the whole focus is on you guys, the first relay of this Trials, what was that moment like when it's not -- when you touch the wall, just basking it all in, what was that like for you guys?

DREW KIBLER: I can say one thing. Kieran suggested that we hold hands in the usual, traditional American way. I was thinking, man, this is going to be fun to be able to do this with an Olympic Medal and in a few -- I guess in five or six weeks, I don't know exactly how far it is.

It was a momentous moment. And also holding hands, a reminder, on a podium, what our next mission is. This is just a start and there's a lot more to go. I shall these guys had some similar feelings.

LUKE HOBSON: I mean, it was awesome to hear your name announced and know that you're an Olympian. That's been a goal of mine for a while. But like Drew said, it's kind of the start of a new chapter, like this one closing, and going into something big and do our best for Team USA.

CHRIS GUILIANO: This is a dream come true, like being a kid. Just taking that moment, I saw a couple of my teammates this in the crowd, and you know, that just really made it all worth it. You know, they made the short trek down from school. And it just meant the world to me. Fourth fourth ditto.

Q. I'm a newbie covering this sport, so this is a real question out of ignorance. How well do you guys know each other and based on that, how much work do you have to do to figure out how to gel and really come together with the weeks that are ahead?

KIERAN SMITH: The best part about the Olympic training camp is its length. It's three or four weeks until once we leave home again and we race at the Games, so like in that time, it's not 100 percent serious all the time and you get to create really great friendships.

Even if we see each other a few times a year, when we get back on the teams together, it's like we have been training together the whole year and we're like best of friends for that month that we're together.

That's one of the best parts about the sport is the relationships that you get to build at training camps and international competitions like this.

Q. You've been a mentor for Alex, and I know it's not official until the team is announced at the end, but what does it mean for her and for the girls program to get a woman on the Olympic Team?

DREW KIBLER: It's super exciting and I'm confident it will work out with all the doubles that our really talented USA women have.

Yeah, she works so hard, and so dedicated and wants it so bad and same for Erin. I could not be happier for both of them. The excitement of seeing them after the races was really cool. I appreciate that question. Really enjoyed my time training with them last year and it's cool to see that hard work, works.

Q. For those are you who competed in Tokyo, is there a few specific things about the overall Olympic experience that you feel you missed because of COVID that you want to make sure you go out of your way to achieve during the Games experience this time around?

KIERAN SMITH: Obviously the biggest one is going to be the crowd. The Instagram accounts for Paris 2024 have been posting some progress photos of the development of the stadium and everything, and it looks just as big as this.

I'm sure there's going to be a huge crowd that I've never experienced.

You'd have to honestly ask one of the Rio Olympians or London Olympians to explain how important that is and how nerve-wracking that's going to be for an international crowd like that.

So looking forward to racing in front of, you know, the crowd.

DREW KIBLER: I'd say this is good practice, though, what we have here. Something else I'm looking forward to as well, it's kind of stressful going through camp and going through the Games constantly testing every single day and just everybody like, Oh, my gosh, what's the next, are we going to make it through another day. And we did and we were fine. Still, it was a constant, Oh, my gosh, like how are we going to be perfect and not have anybody test positive. I'm looking forward to just enjoying not having that stress.

Obviously you don't want to get sick or anything like that but just not having to worry about testing every single day and just being able to enjoy the process with your team and just executing some races and giving it all you've got without having to worry about everything else. That's what we go for.

Q. Just watching you guys out there in the water tonight and seeing you guys up here on the podium, just talk to me about your confidence level. You all seem so poised and so strong together. Tell me about your confidence level going into these Paris Olympics.

KIERAN SMITH: I'm pretty confident in us. It's nice to punch the ticket first. Because the whole season, for me, I can only think about coming here and performing here and actually getting that trip to Paris.

But now, the meet is not over, but after we're done here, we're just going to have to refocus and rekindle our energy to perform the best that we can for the United States at the Games.

LUKE HOBSON: I would say reading this name card makes me feel confident. We swam this -- we swam, like how many times, and you know, like every time, it's just, go out there and do what we do best, yeah.

CHRIS GUILIANO: I mean, really, I'm confident. I'm ready for it. Swimming here has prepared us all very well I think for what we are going to experience in Paris. I mean, I think I can speak for us all in saying we are confident and super excited.

DREW KIBLER: Also whatever the confidence is before hands, once you put that flag cap on, standing with everybody with your flag jacket, it's an awesome feeling. I'm looking forward to feeling that again with these boys.

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