

Overcoming Challenges

The US Open is by far the fastest meet attended by Swim Streamline in our history! That said, it's the fastest meet in the country this year!! This is just a short list of STARS at this meet: Katie Ledecky, Leah Smith, Ashley Twichell, Allison Schmitt (SSAN Olympic Clinic), Chase Kalisz, Ryan Lochte, Will Licon, Caeleb Dressel, Gulf's own Simone Manuel, Kelsi Dahlia (SSAN Olympic Clinic), SSAN boys darling - Olivia Smoliga, Dean Farris, Townley Haas, Zach Apple, Lilli King, Breeja Larson (SSAN Olympic Clinic), Cody Miller, Lauren's fave - Kevin "you already have my last name" Cordes and Open water great as well as our past swimmer - Tennessee Senior, Taylor Abbott. Many swimmers know Gold Medalist Caeleb Dressel's name but picture this...It's Day 1, you are warming up for the biggest meet of your life minding your own business doing some backstroke kick when you feel a tidal wave of water surging and splash over you. You instinctively go under water to protect yourself as the roof must have caved in or the TV camera tower fell over! When you look up through the boiling water, what do you see? A tattooed missile speeding over you warming up butterfly faster than you can race it!! That was SSAN's own Matthew Tannenberger's first experience at the biggest meet of his life...runover by a human speedboat, Olympic Gold Medalist and World Champion Caeleb Dressel. Not exactly the way to build confidence.

Not that my experience was going all sugar and spice. While parking early in the week will be easy, LSU will be in town Thursday for the SEC Championship and they have warned us of parking issues. You CAN pre-pay for a pass, but it doesn't guarantee you a spot at any nearby garages. The coaches meeting was being held during warm-ups and I needed to leave the pool area to attend. There were so many coaches that a small auditorium was needed and the closest was a good five-minute walk through campus. Many coaches were late, and many others lost! As large as the meet was at over 1300 swimmers, it was decided to run two flights of swimmers, an A & B flight. This basically means the officials will run the meet twice, once for the top 60, 80 & 100 seeds in the 400's, 200's and 100/50's respectively, then repeat the meet for the swimmers seeded below the first 6, 8 and 10 heats of all events. Confusing? Oh yea, add a D Final and run final the same way for TV. All A and B finals for events, then all C and D finals for the day. Essentially the changes could mean athletes would be in the water between 6-8AM in the morning and a finals swim for many athletes past 9PM at night as well as mid-afternoon races if you had A and B morning/afternoon flight swims. Original timeline went in the trash and the 50/100 and 200 distances were all re-seeded and new timelines dispersed with the D final now included. At first glance, our first day at the pool will be at least 7-8 hours, over 13 hours if we make finals. We still must travel, eat, park, sleep...Welcome to the big time.

You might be a little concerned for our heroes at this point in the story and with good reason if you know them at all. As it turns out, they were quite up for the challenge. At any meet a swimmer attends, any number of things can happen to derail you mentally while getting good rest and nutrition are paramount to good performance. Positive attitude is your number one weapon to perform well and I heard it constantly from the college and Pro swimmers. Not training long course every day? Race! Warm-up pool crowded? Race! Warm-down pool crowded, narrow, too warm? Race! Recreation pool closed? Race! If everything must be perfect for you to race, you are in the wrong sport. I overheard a college swimmer say, "It's not the man in the race, it's the race in the man."

Success in swimming is interesting that way. You have prepared as well as you can. Now Race. We had concentrated heavily on 400 pace during LCM training sessions on Saturdays and Sundays. Many thanks go out to William Tennison, Will Ridley and Luke Robertson who accompanied us for many extra hours and workouts. I was extremely confident in Matthews ability to perform. What made it even more

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of a thrill for me? Seeded first in the heat also trying to qualify for Olympic Trials was Taylor Abbott. I made Matthew aware that if Taylor is behind, he will close like a freight train the last 100 meters. While Matthew was out slower than we planned, he swam a phenomenal race taking control the second 100, held pace another 100 and just getting edged out by Taylor the last 50! Both were under the Olympic trial cut!! Another best time in the 200 Free missing the cut by 3 tenths and just off his best in the 100 Free by 8 one hundredths of a second.

We were presented many other challenges that week but overcame every one of them gaining knowledge and experience along the way. Every athlete and coach were in the same situation as us and those that chose to handle it as a positive challenge had a great experience. I witnessed a coach arguing with an official over a missed deadline (he did not attend the meeting by the way) while another called a meet official to make sure he hadn't missed one and that his athlete had followed procedure. Perfection in anything is extremely rare. You can't train perfectly every day. No meet will be perfect. No race will be perfect. If you spend your valuable time at practice perfecting your training and racing you will be able to overcome any challenge in front of you.