

## **2015 National Select Camp: My Experience**

written by Michelle Owens

About two weeks ago I was given the opportunity of taking a visit to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO for the 2015 National Select Camp. It was one of the best and most unforgettable experiences of my life. I got to meet talented up-and-coming swimmers from around the country as well as some veteran National Team members including Olympians Michael Phelps, Allison Schmidt, Tyler Clary, and Connor Dwyer. What was unique about this specific camp was that the National Team was holding it's own training camp at the same time. I don't know what I stared more at that weekend; the beautiful snow capped mountains surrounding the campus or Michael Phelps standing on the pool deck in his speedo.

Our daily routine at the camp was a 7:15 am wake up call, 8:00 am-8:30 am breakfast, 9:00 am – 11:00 am morning practice, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm lunch, 12:00 pm-4:30pm classroom lectures, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm afternoon practice, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm dinner, 10:00 pm lights out. It was a pretty tight schedule, but all that time that we spent together meant the closer we got. Within two and a half days, 34 girls went from being total strangers to feeling like a true team.

I'm prone to falling asleep during lectures at school, but the talks we received at the camp kept me wide awake. We got to meet people such as former world record holder Jonty Skinner, National Team Director Frank Busch, and Navy Commander Master Chief James Osborne. They all spoke about different topics, but one idea that was reverberated throughout the entire weekend was that every swimmer in the room became a part of USA Swimming the moment they stepped foot on campus, and that we were now part of something greater than ourselves. I think everyone left the camp believing in that message.

Overall, the camp was a fun, motivational, and eye-opening experience. I got to meet talented people from all over the country and make some great friends. Goodbyes weren't hard though, because I knew that I would be seeing everyone at national meets throughout the year, which will make travel meets that much more fun. It was an extraordinary experience and I am very thankful to have been given the opportunity not only to attend the camp, but also to be able to try the legendary OTC chocolate milk, which exceeded my already high expectations.