

U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming

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CHI Health Center

Torri Huske

100 Butterfly

Michael Andrew

100 Breaststroke

Media Conference



U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS



Q. My question is for Michael. What was the difference in your mindset in going into the semifinal race last night versus tonight? Did you feel a little bit more pressure because it was a final and something was at stake? What was the difference in your approach last night versus tonight?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Yeah, naturally there was a lot more pressure. I remember waking up this morning and probably the first time I felt as nauseous as I was really for anything.

Going into the semis I knew if I could swim similar to what I did in the morning, with little minor details, fix it up, but I got out of my lane and started focus on what Nick was doing next to me and taking that semifinal swim onto the finals, I wanted to make those adjustments and did even worse.

I'm grateful that I was able to get my hand on the wall first. Really the holy spirit guided the swim in that last couple meters, but there is a lot we can work on and I'm excited for the next month as we get ready for Tokyo.

Q. Torri, you talked before about how you didn't want to think about this meet, the atmosphere, until you got here and you were able to shut everything out. How did that go once you got here and take me through the moments when you are standing there getting the medal tonight in front of everybody.

TORRI HUSKE: I feel like I did the same thing even when I was here. When I first walked into the pool, I -- so I watched Wave I last week because my friends were there, and I thought oh my God I'm going to be so intimidated. It looked scary, but it was not that bad. I was preparing myself to be scared and intimidated when I walked in, and I thought okay it's not that bad.

Then even on race day I feel like I don't usually try to think about my swims until, like, I'm warming up. And even then I feel like I kinda just block it all out, but up until like 15 minutes before when I'm in the ready room, I don't usually think about my swim that much.

Oh, the medal ceremony was a little bit overwhelming for me but it was still really fun.

Q. Torri, congratulations. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about the strength training you did in the last year. You said COVID kind of helped you. Specifically what you did and if you think you would have made the Olympic Team had you not done the strength training?

TORRI HUSKE: I don't know, you can never really say. I definitely wouldn't have been as fast -- or I wouldn't have done as well as I did without it. I feel like COVID was a blessing. I tried to make the best out of it that I could, and I feel like the strength training made a big difference in my second 25, because I normally tend to just, like, fly and die. I just go out hard and then I kinda just see if I can hold on, so I feel like it really helped my second 50.

Q. Michael, you did a really interesting podcast with Brett Hawke, and you talked about during lock down last year at some point having these Sunday church lunches, developing connections with people outside the sport. Where do you think those people were watching this? Would they congregate? Could you expand on that idea of purposes as not being, like, big accomplishments but just the connectivity with others?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Right. That's an amazing question, thank you, Karen. Yeah, so first of all, I know my group of friends in Oceanside from my Rhythm Church, they're all watching, and there is a Rhythm House where all the boys live. I can picture them all just going crazy over this evening. Everybody is kinda dispersed, but it was like, this last season was a huge blessing for me, because it was a time that I could be a little bit away from swimming and focus on creating really deeper relationships, connections that went beyond just the superficial, like oh, you're shooting for the Olympics. You're an athlete.

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That was really special for me. It was nice to have that because it takes a lot of the pressure off of the racing, knowing that it doesn't define who I am. Something recently that's struck a chord with me -- and this is 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. It speaks about everybody runs the race but only one achieves the prize. A lot of us -- I get as an athlete we work really hard. We discipline our bodies for an outcome. This outcome is today, where we are now, and it's amazing, but it's perishable.

And I think I can stand up on the blocks today and tomorrow and the rest of my life with a lot of freedom knowing that it doesn't increase my worth and my value to my friends, my relationships, my family, and ultimately, with Jesus Christ. It gives me a lot of freedom to just race and love what I do, so very grateful to be here. Thank you.

Q. Michael, your patients have been involved intimately in your career since day one all the way to now. I know you got to share a moment with your dad in the coaches' box and then your mom. What was that like? Do you feel like it's, you know, they're competing right there with you and it's -- it seems a lot different than the typical swim parent type thing.

MICHAEL ANDREW: We do have a very unique team; it's very much a team. It's hard to kind of put into words. So we recently -- we just came out of a hectic season, a stressful season for our family, and it took a lot of stepping back and understanding what's the bigger picture, much like with our purpose, what I was speaking about with Karen.

Came to a point where our family, our team, was about to separate, and a lot of it was because swimming was at the center, and that was the center of our focus. And now we are able to be here as a family. My sister is here, my biggest supporter, she was crying the biggest crocodile tears, and I love to see that because at a time I felt like I was going to be here, just me and my dad, at Trials.

But we've got our whole family back together, and it's a very special thing. And to be able to finish a race and running to get and give them love, you know, I feel very blessed.

Q. Torri, congratulations. You still have a busy week ahead of you, and I'm wondering if this punching your ticket for Tokyo feels like a weight lifted off you. Does it change at all how you think and contemplate the rest of your week?

TORRI HUSKE: Not really. I feel like it does help me have more confidence for my other races. I'm trying not to get

too high after this race, because I feel like I won't be able to fall asleep at night otherwise, and I have I think two races tomorrow.

I'm trying to, like, focus more on my other races now. I'm trying to, like, move on and start refocusing. It hasn't really changed my mindset.

MICHAEL ANDREW: She is young. She doesn't fatigue yet. (Laughter.)

Q. Torri, congratulations. I'm curious if you could talk about your heritage. In here this week we have talked with others about swimming being a sport that is basically, you know, white kids, right? And I'm curious, especially with the conversation in our country now about -- over issues involving Asian and Asian hate. I'm curious if you would want to speak to that as well. It's a lot I'm throwing at you but I would love to hear about your perspective.

TORRI HUSKE: My mom has a cool story. She grew up in China and grew up in a labor camp in China. After Mao Tse-tung died and the colleges were closed for a long time because they didn't want people to be super educated. Once they opened up again, she was 16 and she had to take this test to potentially get in, and she was competing against thirty years old because they had been closed for so long, so it was competitive getting in, but she is super smart.

She ended up going to college at 16 in China and later she moved to the US. She studied architecture in China but she absolutely hated it, so later she studied engineering, and she studied at Virginia Tech, and she didn't like engineering that much either, and then she became like an IT person. Yeah, I feel like she is a really big inspiration to me. Yeah, I'm just lucky to have her.

Q. Torri, can you talk about making this team and having Claire finish right behind you? There has been a lot made of the "young guns" as you creep up on the veteran swimmers here and you proved something in that race. Do you get the sense and the feeling that that race is the beginning for both of you?

TORRI HUSKE: Yeah, it was super exciting being next to her and Kelsey. I always get so, like, hyped up whenever I race her because I know she is going to put on a really good race. I don't remember, like, during the actual race. I feel like I vaguely remember seeing her off the turn and I know that she is really good underwater. So I remember trying to work my underwaters, but I feel like the rest of it was a blur. But I always get -- the field here is amazing and I was just so happy to be there and to race these

people.

Q. Just to follow up on that a little bit, you mentioned racing Claire. What is your relationship or friendship with her? If there were to be anyone to make it to the Olympics with you, do you like that, because you guys have a bit of a history of racing together?

TORRI HUSKE: Yeah, I think it's so fun. I met her I think at a Select Camp. I don't know how old I was. Then I got to know her a little bit better in Budapest at Junior World's, and I admire her hard work and dedication. I feel like she is really driven, and those are admirable qualities so I'm really excited to go with her to Tokyo.

Q. Torri, you know, you are one of the second teenagers to make the team, and I'm wondering what your youth is bringing to your racing?

TORRI HUSKE: I mean, I don't really know. I feel like I guess it helps me recover faster. I don't know, I don't really know about my youth. I feel like I'm just kind of inexperienced. I don't know if that's bad, but I feel like it's kind of new since I haven't experienced that much. It's kind of nice because everything is so new and still so exciting, just like -- like being here at Trials, this is my first Trials so it's overwhelming just to be here.

The first day Evan will probably tell you I could not focus during practice or when we were warming up. My mind was all over the place, because I was so overwhelmed with, like, everything. But I feel like it's nice just being able to, like, experience something for the first time.

Q. Michael, congratulations.

MICHAEL ANDREW: Thank you.

Q. Couple things. You touched on the disappointment of 2016, not making the team.

MICHAEL ANDREW: Right.

Q. So how does that affect what this means to you, to bounce back and even having to wait an extra year to make up for that?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Yeah, thank you. It didn't feel as much like a redemption swim. I think in 2016 I definitely came into it with the perspective that I'm very young, there was very much an outside chance that I make the team, and I remember swimming really well. I came in 4th to Josh Prenot by a 100th and carried a lot of experience from that race.

Fast forward five years, I had become a short course world champ, won Pan Pacs, and all that led to this day. It's built a greater vessel, and there is maturity with it, and that's why with Torri I'm so excited to see being her first Trials what you're going to go through in the next three years.

You are going to experience so many incredible highs and lows, and it makes you a much better athlete, so I'm stoked for you, but that's where coming off of 2016 really just prepares me for where I'm at now, and it's a blessing.

Q. You mentioned what you've -- the unorthodox way that you -- I remember seeing you five, six, seven years ago, and you all made a commitment to do things different. I don't know if redemption is the right word but, hey, everybody questioned how you were doing it, how your family was doing it, and how everybody was involved. How does that feel now? It sounds like particularly some of you had been through struggles in the past year, so what does this mean in that context?

MICHAEL ANDREW: It's surreal. I hate to -- you know, we grow up in an age where social media and the comment section is a very toxic place. It's unfortunate, because there is no face to that. People can say what they want without consequences and the athletes are the ones that read it, are the ones that kind of -- is sits in their heads.

I've fallen culprit to that. I used to internalize what was said on the blog sites.

In a way it feels great, like I've vindicated myself, yeah, stick it to 'em, but I realize it doesn't change anything, and I think it's really important to focus on the positive voices and the voices that are speaking life in to you. But it is really nice to now -- I find it hard for people to say that the way we train and the things we do don't work, because we have, you know, officially made it on the biggest stage.

Obviously we have to continue to perform, and then we live in a performance world, and that's great. Obviously you're only as good as your last swim, but I'm excited for the opportunity to continue to prove what we do is driven by love, purpose, and we've got a passion beyond just winning medals.

Q. Torri, did you know that you had the capability of coming here and going 55s and making this kind of impact? How did you know? And the follow-up is have you considered what this means looking ahead to the Olympics at all?

TORRI HUSKE: I feel like I usually know what I'm capable of but I don't know if I will necessarily go that time. I don't

know if that makes sense. I feel like in the past people have kind of asked me what I thought would happen and stuff like that, and I usually try to dodge those questions because I don't like sharing that stuff specifically.

I feel like it's definitely a good omen for what's next. I feel like -- I mean, I was still surprised when I saw the board because I feel like you don't know, like, what's going to happen when you swim.

Q. (No microphone.)

TORRI HUSKE: Um, I thought maybe I would go 55. Yeah. But I wasn't sure. I wasn't sure with the new environment. Everything is so new, I didn't know if I would be able to do that, but I usually like the energy of the crowd and just, like, the arena, you can feel it.

I feel like I usually swim better when there is a lot of energy, and it's just -- I feel like when the pressure is -- like the more pressure there is, I feel like the better I do, which is kind of weird, but I don't know. I guess it works.

MICHAEL ANDREW: It's a good quality to have.

TORRI HUSKE: Thanks.

Q. Torri, one of the things that I think is so cool about Trials is you sort of have these people that you're racing against that maybe you have grown up looking up to and all of the sudden you are on equal footing with them. You are on the Olympic Team with maybe people that haven't punched their ticket yet, but you have been maybe thinking about that for a long time.

So how it feels to be on the same dais as Michael Andrew and potentially on the same team as others, does it feel like you deserve to be there?

TORRI HUSKE: I don't know. A lot of people have been saying "good job" to me who are, like, really famous swimmers. I'm kind of like, I didn't know you knew who I am. And Lilly King in the warm-down pool after my race was kind of like, are you going to get the rings was tattooed, and I was like, I don't know. I mean, I thought about it in the past but I have no idea.

Also apparently Katie Ledecky, Gregg said that she called my exact time that I would go, like she predicted it before I swam, so I thought that was kinda cool.

Q. As a follow-up, we talked about you being nervous in the warm-up pool potentially being around Olympians, but do you think you're going to be on the flip side of that where people will be scared to swim in

the same lane as you?

TORRI HUSKE: That's weird to think about because I feel like I'm not super scary but, um, I don't know. Hopefully not.

Q. Michael, there seems to be a story but quality to this night for you. You meet Michael at five, you break all of his national age group records and then when you make the team. He's in the building watching. Can you describe what that's like? There aren't very many people who have their idols there on your big night and also what it's like to communicate with him.

MICHAEL ANDREW: Yeah, it's an honor. I got to see Michael in the warm-down area earlier today. I think it was earlier today, and he was greeting some of the Cal guys and I got to go up and "dap" him up and say hi. You know, over the last couple of weeks he's been watching my races. He's been following -- probably just not the last couple of weeks, but the last couple of years, but it's cool that he's been intentional with reaching out to me and supporting me and encouraging where I'm at.

For me it's not something I ever expected, but I'm super grateful to know, just like Torri is, when the greatest of all time acknowledged that you are in a position to now carry the baton to represent the country that they have done so well in doing so, is just a huge honor. All respect to Phelps. He's a legend, and I can only do my best now.

Q. Michael, have you thought at all about the Medley Relay in Tokyo? There were a lot of questions about who the breaststroker would be for the US to go up against Adam Peaty. What are your thoughts?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Yeah, it's 100% in the forefront of my mind. I know there is -- for me I'm a very -- I'm my worst critic, so even after this swim immediately I'm thinking what did I do wrong? Why did I come back so slowly, et cetera, et cetera. How can I fix this for Tokyo?

I believe the team will see that and I'm excited to -- I hope I've earned my spot on that relay and can continue to prove my worth in that spot, but I'm excited to know that we do have a very strong relay and, you know, we're going to take it to the Brits. As do they, they have a strong relay, but we will let the swimming do the talking.

Q. Torri, Michael alluded to earlier about what kept him grounded and centered this past year. Given everything that has happened this past year, leading up to this moment, I'm just curious what kept you grounded and what kept you centered and focused that led to this amazing accomplishment this evening?

TORRI HUSKE: I feel like my friends keep me grounded because they treat me like a normal person. I couldn't have done this without them, I feel like, just because they're so supportive and I love them so much.

Then what keeps me focused, I feel like my coach, my parents and myself. I feel like I know my goals and I know what it's going to take to get there. I guess my goals keep me focused.

Q. Michael, you mentioned earlier that during a period you internalized some of those negative comments on social media, and the criticism, whatnot. How did you get over that hump, get to a better place with all that?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Thank you. That's a good question. So initially in the beginning I felt like I would internalize it and use it as motivation to work harder, kind of in training and things like that, be like, oh, BilboBaggins349, I'm going to prove you wrong type of thing. The more you focus on the negative and the -- yeah, the more you focus on the negative the more it starts to show up in the light when you train, and I realized I had to stop doing that.

So as I matured -- it's still very hard. I still love to read swim comments and look at all that stuff, but I realized there has to be a time when I can completely switch it off, and I do the same with social media. Even coming into this now, I can finally follow people back, but I decided to shut myself off completely from it because if it's there, if it's accessible, human nature is going to want to watch, want to see, want to read it.

I realized I just have to understand that it's not healthy for me, and the best way to fight it is to avoid it all together. That's where I'm at with that. Thank you.

Q. Michael, since Adam's name came up, how do you process that your reward for what you did tonight is to go up against a person who's gone a second faster than the rest of the world?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Ouch, Karen, thank you! No, Adam is a friend of mine. I've raced with him so many times. He's an incredible athlete. Greatest of all time. He's proved it, over and over. The plan now is to etch away at his name and to get closer and take it one race at a time. I feel like going into it thinking I'm going to go there just to clobber Adam; it's not the right mentality.

I feel like I need to focus on myself, and even my performance this evening is kind of a reflection of that. Understanding that I didn't swim my own race this evening, I was fortunate to take the win, but I know I'm capable of so

much more. Now we're going to train that and get ready because come head-to-head with Adam, he's going to be out quick and he's going to come home quick. His tempo is much higher than mine. I have a very long, weird stroke and -- so I've got to be focused on me, but I know I'll be there.

Q. Michael, you've talked about just all the distractions, the comments, the social media all this kind of stuff, and the doubters. For you personally, take me through this -- just through you, not your team, not your family, just how has this process of unorthodox training, how did it start? How did you get sold on it early? How do you feel about this moment of validation for yourself?

MICHAEL ANDREW: Yeah, that's a loaded -- I mean, I could write a book on that question alone. It's hard to speak about "I" in terms of what I feel. It's always been a "we" effort. From the beginning it was my family and my parents that discovered Dr. Brent Rushall's science of USRPT, became USRPT in 2011.

We implemented the training and we've morphed it a bit to what we feel works. The science is still there. The application is specificity. We don't lift weights, we don't do anything outside of the pool really; it's all pace, all speed, creating neuro pathways so that in theory we can come to the race and it happens naturally.

For me as an athlete, I was fortunate to grow up on a club team. I did that for a season, and quickly my dad -- he swam as well, and he realized there's got to be another way to do this, and we sought it out as a family.

There was always buy-in, but I feel like the buy-in individually came in later, as I developed and became a little smarter. I wasn't always the smartest kid. To train and believe fully in your training methodology is vital when it comes to being an elite athlete, so I'm fortunate to be in that position.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you all for joining.

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