



3 GREAT STORIES, FOR EVERY SWIMMER

At the recent 2024 WSI Award Banquet, several BAC swimmers along with Coach Jacob and Coach Jay were in attendance to hear a great talk by UW-Madison Head Coach Yuri Suguiyama. Yuri has been fortunate enough to have swimmers that he directly coached make the US Olympic Team for each of the past 3 Olympiads, starting in 2012, and he had a story about each experience. Obviously, these stories dealt with some of the very best swimmers in the world, but the lessons are applicable to EVERY swimmer, and we wanted to share them with you...

2012 OLYMPIC TRIALS: KATIE LEDECKY

Yuri was Katie Ledecky's Coach from about age 12 through the 2012 Olympics. In the lead up to the Olympic Trials, Yuri knew he and Katie had an 'experience' issue – Katie had obviously never been to an Olympic Trials meet before, and he was a young coach who had never coached at that level either. He talked with trusted veteran coaches and the takeaway was the same; trust the process and trust the work that you and the athlete had been doing together. He and Katie had gotten to that level for a reason – not through luck or by accident. Katie did exactly that, qualified for a spot on the 2012 Olympic Team, and came home from London with a Gold Medal in the 800 Free!

2016 OLYMPIC TRIALS: CAL BERKLEY BEARS

By 2016, Yuri was now coaching in college for the juggernaut Cal Bears. Trials was a different environment, having a ton of swimmers participating and several favored to make the team. Cal dominated both the Trials and the Olympics in Rio as well (19 total medals including 8 Gold Medals from Cal-connected swimmers). But none of that success 'surprised' Yuri – he had seen those athletes put in their hard work day in and day out for years leading up to the competition. There are no guarantees in sports, but when you prepare the way that they did, success isn't too surprising either.

2021 (2020) OLYMPIC TRIALS: PHOEBE BACON

By the 2020 Olympiad – with events held in 2021, Yuri was the new-ish coach at UW. His best collegiate swimmer that winter had been Phoebe Bacon – the freshman NCAA champion in the 200 Back. He knew she had a shot at making the team, but also knew that SCY success is different than LCM, and that it was a crowded backstroke field. One of her early races was the 100 Back – her second best event. She swam 'okay, not great' and ended up third at Trials, one spot away from qualifying for the team. She was – understandably – upset and worried and mad. He told her she had a lot of swimming left, to take 30 minutes to be mad about her swim, but that she had other races and needed to shake it off ASAP. She was able to do just that, went a lifetime best in her 200, made the Olympic Team and placed 5th at the Tokyo Games.



Each of these lessons can apply to EVERY single BAC swimmer, maybe even a few times a year!

- When faced with a new situation – trust what you've been doing that's been making you successful
- Success comes from weeks, months, or even YEARS of hard work and preparation
- We all have 'bad races' – learn to shake it off and get ready for the next one.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE BACers NOMINATED FOR A WISCONSIN SWIMMING AWARD, INCLUDING 'SWIMMER OF THE YEAR' WINNERS FREDDIE, WILL, AND ABE!