

July 29, 2004

Day Three! It's hard to believe that tomorrow is the last day of this meet. It always goes by so fast. But even though we are only here for a short amount of time, the memories made here will always last a lifetime. Being around people who share the same love of this sport as I do is just a great feeling. There truly isn't a better meet than this one. Not only does it bring upon great competition, but it also allows the swimmers to meet so many new people. You walk onto the pool deck (and besides the smell of chlorine) you just sense that the atmosphere is full of friendly, caring people and it's just super!

Well, yesterday was Emily's birthday and we had a little celebration after dinner. It was nice to finally be able to have some cake seeing eating dessert isn't exactly allowed during the meet, but it was a special occasion :) We also got her a build-a-bear dressed up as a pink lady (our outfit we wore to the parade of athletes).

So tonight is a very exciting night for our team. We get to come back for finals and hold the water banner while Arie reads his devotion and Chels sings the National Anthem. It'll be a lot of fun and a great way to show our team spirit to all the other teams here.

So I usually write a little story about my experiences as a swimmer each year. And seeing today is my day off of swimming, I figure it's a good time to write it. I guess the main focus of what I am about to write is that having fun in what you are doing is more important than anything else. The greatest swimmer in the world may be fast, but if he's not swimming for himself and doesn't find swimming fun, then it is impossible for him to reach his full potential in the sport. And reaching your full potential isn't always swimming at world record pace, it's swimming your best time and being proud of yourself. It's about getting out of the pool and telling yourself that you just swam the best race of your whole entire life.

Well, this year after my high school season I really didn't want to get back into the pool right away. I had just finished tapering and swimming our big meets. I just wanted some time to myself and some time to be able to hang out with my friends. However, I went right back to my regular team and I just couldn't get back to really enjoying swimming. Practices started to be a hassle and I never wanted to go. Finally one day I just decided to stop swimming. I didn't feel like I was swimming for myself and swimming no longer made me happy. But stopping swimming was the best choice I ever made. It made me realize that I was swimming for myself and how much I missed the water. I doubt if I kept swimming while I was unhappy I wouldn't be here again this year. I'm not saying that this is the best route to take when you are unhappy with swimming, but you need to stay true to yourself. It's been a hard path I've taken, trying to get back into shape and I know that I still have a ways to go, but the things you truly love in life are worth all the path and hard times. They are only going to ultimately make you the happiest person in the world.

I have two quotes to leave you all with today. I hope you enjoy and I'll be sure to write again tomorrow :) bye bye!

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"Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom"

"Being your best is not so much about overcoming the barriers other people place in front of you as it is about overcoming the barriers you put in front of ourselves. It has nothing to do with how many times you win or lose. It has no relation to where you finish in a race or whether you break world records. But it does have everything to do with having the vision to dream, the courage to recover from adversity and the determination never to be shifted from your goals"
- kieren perkins [AUS]