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Acalanes Grad and Former UCSB Star Swims in Second Olympic Trials

By Karl Buscheck



Katie Records at the Lafayette City Meet in 2010 Photos Gint Federas

A veteran of two Olympic trials, Katie Records watches the proceedings in Rio with a level of appreciation that few can understand.

"I think for me personally knowing how much time and hard work is spent preparing for the Olympics, it makes it that much more enjoyable for me to watch," Records said.

For the Acalanes grad, it can also be difficult to tune in.

"But then at the same time, it makes it that much harder because when athletes don't hit all of their dreams or go as fast as they wanted to swim," Records said. "(I know) they have been training for four years - just for those few, honestly, seconds of racing. And if they're lucky, a couple of minutes."

From June 26 to July 3, Records was among the select group of swimmers competing for a spot on the Olympic team at the trials in Omaha, Nebraska. After swimming in the 200-meter breaststroke in 2012, Records took part in the 100-meter race earlier this summer.

"The second time was definitely a different experience than the first," Records explained. "The first time I was just kind of star struck and in awe of the spectacle that they created. Whereas the second time I knew what to expect - granted they had taken the show to a whole new level."

Records was a late entrant into the world of competitive swimming.

"I didn't have the dream that most young swimmers have when they start swimming and they look up to the Olympians," Records said. "Obviously, they were incredible, but I never thought that I'd get to that level."

Part of the reason is that Records didn't commit herself fully to the sport until her senior year at Acalanes - when she was an All-American in the 100-meter breaststroke. Before becoming a swimming star for the Dons, Records excelled as a competitive Irish Dancer, taking part in a pair of world championships.

"I learned so much through dance and swimming," Records said. "(I learned) about time management and leadership and working with other people. I truly think everything paid off in the end and everything was worth it."

Back in 2011, as Records searched for collegiate opportunities, she found her options limited.

"Greg Wilson, the coach at (UC Santa Barbara), he had been there for 35 years by the time I got there and he just finished his fortieth year and just went into retirement," Records said. "He truly was the one college coach that was willing to give me a shot - even just as a walk-on.

Wilson's bet paid off.

In her first season with the Gauchos, Records won the 200-meter breaststroke at the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Championships and was named the conference's Freshman of the Year. It was during that breakout season that Records first realized she had the chance to swim her way to one of the biggest stages in the sport.

"It wasn't until after my freshman year in college that I thought I might actually have a shot at qualifying for the Olympic trials," Record said. "So, after my freshman year of college championship meet it was really my goal to qualify for the 2012 Olympic trials."

After her first taste of the trials, Records continued to excel at UCSB. In 2015, Records completed a hat trick at the MPSF Championships, winning the 100-meter and 200-meter breaststroke along with the 200-meter individual medley. That showing also earned her the title of UCSB Female Athlete of the Year.

"It was such an honor and I never thought that it would be something that I would be able to accomplish or that it was even on my radar," Records said. "But as soon as I did see that little bit of success and the success that came from all that hard work it just made you want to work even harder and set even higher goals for myself."



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