



# Klete Keller

## ...at a glance

### Career Highlights

5-time Olympic Games medalist (2 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze)  
4-time NCAA Champion  
Former American record-holder (400 freestyle, 800 free relay)  
Former World record-holder (800 free relay)



Swimming

### Vital Statistics

**Born:** March 21, 1982  
**Hometown:** Phoenix, AZ  
**Resides:** Crofton, MD  
**Height:** 6'6"  
**Education:** Southern Cal / Eastern Michigan



## getting to know...

Klete Keller

### Biography

People who meet Klete Keller might at first notice a laidback, fun-loving attitude, a persona that can disguise Keller's status as a member of one of swimming's greatest dynasties.

Keller says that attitude came about through interactions with the athletes he admired as a young swimmer, and credits it with his long-term success in competitive swimming.

"I grew up admiring Gary Hall Jr, Troy Dalbey, Jon Olsen and Yann Defabrique, just to name a few," Keller says. "What struck me most about those guys was how calm and self-entertained they always were in regard to training and competition. They didn't take themselves too seriously and they had fun all while putting in quality work at the same time."

Keller got a chance to work with some of his idols when he trained alongside the fast-rising group of sprinters known as The Race Club, started by Hall and his father, Gary Hall, Sr.

It was among that environment that Keller first began to blossom into one of the world's premier mid-distance freestylers.

In 2000, he, along with a wave of his Race Club teammates, stormed the [Olympic](#) Games in Sydney, winning bronze in the 400 free and silver in the 4x200 free relay.

That 4x200 relay, though, turned into perhaps the most storied piece of Keller's career. The Americans were second to Australia in 2000, and the Aussies boasted a lineup that looked nearly unbeatable, headlined by superstar Ian Thorpe.

In Between the Olympics, Keller moved to Club Wolverine in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Keller and his new Club Wolverine teammate Peter Vanderkaay set their minds to claiming that relay throne from the Land Down Under.

By the time the 2004 Athens Olympics rolled around, Keller and Vanderkaay joined rising U.S. stars Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte to put up a formidable threat to Thorpe and Australia.

The race was a heavyweight fight that came down to the very end, with Keller anchoring against Thorpe, who was widely considered the best swimmer on the planet. Though Thorpe fought hard, Keller was able to hold off his charge, giving the Americans Olympic gold and handing the Aussies their first major loss in the event in seven years.

What emerged from that race was a 4x200 free relay dynasty, as Keller's teams went on to be nearly unbeatable for the era. In fact, the U.S. has not lost the relay in Olympic competition since Keller's amazing anchor leg in 2004.

After those Olympics, Michael Phelps would join Club Wolverine, and create three-fourths of a relay that would dominate for half-a-decade.

"I think a big part of our dominance was the pride we had in training together," Keller says.

"We formed such a great bond and knew that what we were doing in practice everyday was special," Keller says. "Because

of that, no other country in the world could touch us.”

In addition to his time with The Race Club and Club Wolverine, Keller also spent two seasons in Los Angeles in 2000 and 2001, attending school at [USC](#) and swimming for the NCAA’s Trojans, where he won 4 NCAA titles. He returned to USC in 2007 to finish his degree.