



Merrill Moses

...at a glance

Career Highlights

2008 Olympic silver medalist.
Most valuable goalie at 2003 U.S. Cup
1st-team All-American goalkeeper at Senior Nationals in 2002.
1997 1st-Team All-American at Pepperdine
1997 NCAA Championship MVP at Pepperdine



Water Polo

Vital Statistics

Born: August 13, 1977
Hometown: Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
Resides: Los Angeles, CA
Height: 6'3
Education: Pepperdine 2000



getting to know...

Merrill Moses

Biography

For the past decade or so, there have been two fixtures on and faces of the American men's National Water Polo team. One is the program's all-time leading scorer, Tony Azevedo. The other is goalie Merrill Moses, who has been Team USA's number-one goalie for the last eight years, with designs to fight through until the 2016 Summer Olympics as well, where he will be almost 40 years old. Moses was named to the 2008 Olympic All-World squad, after leading the Americans to their highest finish in 20 years with a silver-medal, eventually falling to the Hungarians.

Through years of experience, he has developed into one of the World's greatest goalies, an NCAA Champion at Pepperdine, and played professionally in Croatia, Italy, and Spain, but his start in water polo was a bit of an unusual one. "During football training camp before my freshman year (of high school) I decided that football was not the sport for me" said the 6'3", 216 pound California native, joking that he was trying to avoid the heat of summer football practices. He heard whistles come from the pool deck, and after watching for a few minutes, decided he'd give it a go. It would be simple then to say "and the rest was history," but Moses' path to stardom was still not determined from there. He started as an attacker, wanting to score goals.

During his sophomore year, his Peninsula High School team needed a goalie, and Mose' first shot came as many goalies do: the coach tried everyone there, until someone stuck, and Moses stuck in a big way. He then wound up walking on to the team at Pepperdine University, choosing to play in college despite not being awarded a scholarship immediately. Once again, he had to work his way to his ideal position, and by the end of his freshman season he was the starting goalie, a position he wouldn't give up for his four years, including leading the Waves to their first, and only, NCAA Championship.

Moses then pursued a professional career; still relatively inexperienced compared to most of the national-level ranks, he didn't make the cut for the 2000 Olympic Team, and went to play professionally in Spain. When 2004 rolled around again, Moses was in a much better position to make the Olympic squad, but a few weeks out from the Athens Game, he was the last man cut from Team USA, meaning Olympic disappointment again. At that point, with his Olympic dreams on life support, he walked away from water polo.

He would be in his 30's by the time his next Olympic opportunity came around in 2008, a relatively advanced age for a professional in this country to wait to make their breakthrough. So he put on his suit and tie, and went into the mortgage business. In 2006, though, Terry Schroeder, an assistant coach of USA Water Polo and Moses' college coach, called the then 29-year old goalkeeper and asked him if he would consider returning to the sport. The Americans were coming off of their lowest-ever finish at the 2005 World Championships, 11th place, and an equally-disappointing finish at the World League, where they gave up the second-most goals in the semifinal round (over 12 per game). Without hesitation, Moses was back in the water the next day training.

At the 2007 World Championships, the Americans were 9th. In Beijing in 2008, Team USA made their big breakthrough, winning a silver medal after fighting Hungary wire-to-wire. Since he earned the position, Moses hasn't given it up, and is now one of the veteran members of the U.S. National Team.

His career as one of the greatest goalies in American water polo history was one that almost didn't happen and was nearly derailed four different times. In the end, though, Moses was ready for his break. It wasn't his first choice, and it wasn't his only

choice, but water polo was his right choice, and when his opportunity came, he was ready.