



Tom Luchsinger

...at a glance

Career Highlights

2013 USA National Champion (200 fly)
Three-Time USA Swimming National Teamer
2013 World Championship Finalist (200 fly – 5th)
10-Time NCAA All-American



Swimming

Vital Statistics

Born: February 28th, 1991
Hometown: Bethpage, NY
Resides: Baltimore, MD
Height: 6'1"

Sponsors





getting to know... Tom Luchsinger

Biography

Tom Luchsinger's transition from All-American collegiate swimmer to professional athlete has been full of surprises.

In swimming, surprises are a bit of a taboo-concept. Athletes and coaches spend hours-upon-hours-upon-hours training, perfecting technique, and preparing themselves mentally, in the hopes that when they get in the water for two minutes of furious action at the end of the season, there aren't any surprises.

The last two summers, though, Luchsinger has been on both the right and the wrong end of surprise.

"Following the 2012 Olympic Trials was a very, very difficult time for me with regard to my swimming career," Luchsinger said. "Not because I failed to make the London Team--I was well aware that that particular goal was a bit of a long shot--I was upset because I failed to final in the event I was seeded highest in, my 200 fly where I finished 12th.

"Following the Olympic Trials, the LAST thing I wanted to do was swim. I love every aspect of swimming--the practices, and the competitions--so this feeling of disdain for the sport was very unsettling for me. This time the water was the problem-- something that never happened before. This funk lasted probably about 2 weeks, and I seriously considered walking away from the sport after the completion of my college career."

Luchsinger says that he had to deal with a lot of emotions after that first surprise. He first was ready to walk away from the sport, but after watching the successes of swimmers like Missy Franklin and Michael Phelps at the Olympics, he was ready to go for the 2016 Olympic Games.

He decided to take a step back as he began his senior year, and avoid what he called 'the Olympic hype.'

"As a National Team athlete it is virtually impossible to watch the Americans do what they do and not get caught up in it - it truly is contagious."

Then, surprise number two came. While doing some cross-training with his teammates at the University of North Carolina, he dislocated his kneecap, which left him with a significant amount of time out of the water.

That time away reminded him of exactly how much he loves the sport, even in the day-to-day grind, and convinced him to keep training.

After a year of challenges, Luchsinger was ready for a break to go his way, and in the summer of 2013 things did when he won the 200 fly at the 2013 USA Swimming World Championship Trials and earned a trip to Barcelona, Spain as part of Team USA. This was particularly significant, as he was the first winner of that race at a trials meet in a decade not named 'Phelps'.

Elite athletes all have some level of confidence. That confidence is tinged with varying level of humility, but nobody can achieve world-class performances like Luchsinger's without at least a tinge of ego.

Tom, however, is not afraid to admit that even he was surprised. Luchsinger describes his emotion:

"When I looked up following the finish of my 200 fly race at World Championship Trials, all that came to my mind was 'No way.' I was prepared to be heading to Russia the following week for World University Games. I really was competing at WCT for the experience of racing, with maybe an outside shot of making a relay.

"I think everyone could just see the shock on my face, and I have a feeling that reaction will stay with me for a long time, no matter what happens to me in the near future. Reporters at worlds were saying that I looked very surprised to make the worlds team.. Boy is that a correct statement!"

Luchsinger had twice been asked to represent the United States on more minor teams, but had to decline. So this was his first opportunity to represent the United States abroad.

Now, as a professional, Luchsinger has embraced surprise as an inevitable part of swimming, just as it is in all sports.

"Sometimes in college you can get wrapped up in the pressure to perform well every time you race. One thing I have recognized since becoming professional is that you swim a lot of races in a year; some of them will go terribly wrong, others will go very well. Regardless you need to learn from every race if you want to swim your best at the end of the year. So I look back at analysis, and see what I need to work on to have that last season race, something that I shied away from during my college career."