

National Diversity Select Camp Experience

The USA Swimming National Diversity Select Camp was a one-of-a-kind experience, and it had a lasting impact on me for several reasons. It allowed me to interact and meet with elite and diverse swimmers, who are the fastest in their events. I was given a chance to learn from those who are the best in their age groups: their techniques, their training style, and their swimming attitude in general. The fantastic coaching staff from around the country provided valuable and frequent feedback that helped me during the camp. Swimming with people as fast or faster than me was a chance to race against others and to continue to challenge my expectations for myself.

Another meaningful opportunity this camp gave me was to swim with fast swimmers who also look like me. I don't often come across many swimmers (fast or not) who look like me - in practice or at meets. Thanks to this initiative, I saw other fast swimmers who look like me and who also look out at the pool deck, waiting to see someone who looks like them as well. It will be great to see my swim camp friends at swim meets and to stay connected with them.

This experience also provided the context to form many friendships with people who also have a similar love of swimming. I look forward to seeing these swimmers and the coaches at high level meets. I will be able to talk with them and cheer them on. While we may be on different teams, we are committed to the same sport.

Finally, at the camp I learned from and listened to people and Olympians who had accomplished a lot, but at one time, they were like us and just had hopes and dreams. Overall, the extraordinary stories of people who had nothing yet rose and determined their own fate and the messages they shared, will stay with me throughout my entire life. It was inspiring to represent USA Swimming, CPAC, and Connecticut at this camp. Thanks to all who made this experience possible!

-Ayaan Olasewere