

# Godsoe Swimming Towards Olympic Dream

By Mike Watkins//Correspondent

In 2009 at the World University Games, Eugene Godsoe learned the hard way that there is much more to adapt to at an international meet than the competition.

Described as “nothing short of a disaster,” Godsoe left Serbia having learned more about circumstances and choices than takeoffs and turns.

It’s a lesson he used to his advantage in his final NCAA season, and it’s knowledge and experience he intends to use next week at the Pan American Games and beyond.

“That (WUGs) was my worst meet to date, and while I was way off my personal goals, I used the meet as a learning experience,” said Godsoe, who will be one of only five U.S. males swimmers to compete in more than one individual event (100 backstroke and 100 butterfly) in Guadalajara.

“I’m excited to be a part of another ‘Games,’ and I’m sure having gone through one before (huge athlete village, cafeterias, close-quarter dorms, etc.) will help me stay relaxed and keep me focused on performing.”

Focus is something with which the Stanford graduate has rarely struggled.

Ever since his first summer league swims as a 7-year-old, Godsoe knew he had found something that would not only change but also help define his life.

“I just have a real love for the sport,” Godsoe said. “I’ve had a lot of ups and downs in my career – shoulder surgery in 2006 almost took me out of the sport completely -- but the ups have always been amazing. The downs make me want to come back and compete even harder.

“I still have a lot of goals not accomplished, and I feel like I’m on the verge of a lot of good things happening in the future.”

With his top four finishes in the 100 back and 100 fly at this summer’s ConocoPhillips USA Swimming National Championships, Godsoe reached one of his highest goals by earning a spot on his first U.S. National Team.

Following a disappointing 2010 U.S. Nationals (he made one consolation final), Godsoe attributes his results this summer to the past year training with David Marsh and the other post-grads at SwimMAC -- Mecklenburg Aquatic Club in Charlotte, N.C.

A North Carolina native -- he grew up in Greensboro before moving to Palo Alto, Calif., to swim for Stanford, where he won an NCAA title in the 100 back his senior year -- Godsoe was eager to return to his roots.

It gave him a new outlook on his swimming career and re-lit the fire to want to reach for more in the water.

"It's an inspiring group to be a part of every day," Godsoe said. "It's a great environment where we have about 15 guys and girls focused on the singular goal of Olympic medals. When I first moved, I was focused solely on training, but I've realized I perform my best when I am staying busy with other things as well as swimming.

“The difference in my approach this year (at Nationals) was preparation. There were too many distractions leading up to 2010 Nationals – graduating, moving back to North Carolina, etc. – and this year, I was able to stay consistent with my routine leading up to the meet.”

With his degree in political science with an emphasis on international relations and economics, Godsoe, who is doing an internship with Wells Fargo, knows he has a strong education to fall back on once his swimming career ends. He said he would eventually like to go back to Stanford for his MBA and focus on developing his innate entrepreneurial interests and skills.

He also has a very strong interest and talent for music, performing locally with his band Take Your Mark -- singing and playing piano with band mate Greg Pearsall.

"Music is my other big passion in life," said Godsoe, who has made a name for his band with his YouTube video at [www.youtube.com/takeyourmarkmusic](http://www.youtube.com/takeyourmarkmusic). "My dream is to be a world-famous rock star. Kidding -- but not really. We took a little hiatus before and after Nationals this summer, but now we're starting to record again and will continue to put our songs out online."

For the immediate time being, however, Godsoe is focused solely on swimming fast at Pan Ams.

He sees it as a dress rehearsal of sorts leading up to 2012 Trials and the Olympics -- which took on new importance and realism based on his 2008 Trials experience.

“Swimming at 2008 Trials proved inspiring for me,” Godsoe said. “My goal was to ‘get some TV time,’ a.k.a., make semifinals, and I was

able to accomplish that and go best times. However, I'm the kind of guy who is always looking at what's next. After Trials, I asked myself, 'So now, what's keeping me from being the guy in the finals? What about being top two? Do I want to watch the Olympics on TV or be there in person next time?'

"I'm very excited for Trials next year. All I can do over the next 10 months is put myself in the best possible position to be in the hunt. The work I'm able to accomplish and improvements I make will dictate how everything falls into place, so I'm focused on the process of getting there. The 100 back and 100 fly are both really exciting events for me. I'm also trying to throw my name into the hat for the 100 free, so basically, if it's a 100-meter race that's not breaststroke, I want to be competitive for a spot on the Olympic team."