

Happy Tuesday!

Well...

Did you watch NCAA's last week?

There was some *unbelievably* fast swimming.

In particular, Florida's Caeleb Dressel put on a masterwork clinic that will go down as HOF-worthy.

His most epic performance came on night one in the 50-yard freestyle. His prelim swim had rattled the 18 second barrier when he went a casual-looking 18.10.

Later that night, as finals got underway and the finalists for the 4x50-yard freestyle relay got up on the blocks, there was a buzz in the building.

Dressel would be leading off for the Florida relay.

He didn't disappoint.

With his trademark start and breakout he was off to an early lead and sailed Florida out into a lead. When he surfed into the wall the building erupted—17.81.

Just like that, the 18 second barrier was busted.

Later in the program he'd have a chance to break it again in the individual race.

And again—he showed up, swimming *even faster*.

His time?

An other-worldly 17.63.

A time so fast that most of us who have been following the sport for long enough can't properly understand it.

The number is there...we can read it...but understanding it is another task altogether.

In one day he'd dropped half a second off the American record in the event.

In a 50.

Spectators in the stands had their hands on their heads, jaws on the floor. The online swimming community was awash with disbelief. We'd just born witness to one of the—if not *the*—most impressive performance in short course yards swimming history.

SwimSwam ran a comparison showing his margin of dominance: it would be like Usain Bolt running a 9.25 100m dash.

Beyond the ludicrousness of the swim, **suddenly the expectations of what is possible took a dramatic shift.**

- When will we see a :16 relay split?
- With his 17 second 50, will he do the same to the 100-yard freestyle mark (40:00) and bypass :39 altogether, swimming a :38?
- Will we finally see someone break Cesar Cielo's long course world records in the 50 and 100's freestyle?

In the span of a furious 17 seconds, Dressel had redefined *for everyone* what it meant to be fast.

This moment is something that is replicated on a smaller scale in pools across the country...

- A swimmer does an interval for the very first time, redefining what they think is possible.
- A junior swimmer does the main set with the senior group, realizing for the first time that they are more capable than they thought.
- A get-up effort shows a swimmer that they can swim fast in practice at the end of a brutal practice.

Those breakthrough performances in practice build confidence, the expand limits, and they teach swimmers to redefine what is possible in the pool.

It can be argued that the swimmers who scale the ladder of achievement fastest are the ones who are breaking through those perceived limits the quickest.

Are your workouts designed to give swimmers the opportunity to tickle or smash what they think is possible?

This means chasing in-practice bests often.

Pushing limits regularly in training.

Escalating and progressing difficulty, whether it's intervals, effort or yardage.

Let me know your thoughts.

Talk to ya next week,

Olivier