

RATE

(1 VOTES)

by: *Jennifer Starks, Columnist*

Getty Images

Elaine Breeden seeks redemption in 2010.

06/19/10

SANTA CLARA, California - Two years ago, **Elaine Breeden** was on top of the world.

The top finisher in the 100m butterfly at the 2008 U.S. Olympic Trials, she was thrust into the spotlight with a ticket to the Beijing Games in her hand. Suddenly, everyone was eager to learn more about the fresh-faced swimmer who shared family ties with Diane Sawyer and Johnny Depp.

One year later, however, Breeden received a stark reminder that past success does not guarantee future spoils. After a pair of third-place finishes in the 100 and 200 butterfly at the **2009 National Championships**, she failed to qualify for the **2009 FINA World Championships** and was left to wonder what went wrong.

"Last summer, I learned a lot," said Breeden, a silver medalist in Beijing. "After making the Olympic team, I just thought I had to do the same thing. I did that and got third. That really showed me I have to do some new things in order to improve. I can't take anything for granted."

Given what's on the line in the coming months, it's safe to say Breeden's focus is sharp. She's currently using the Santa Clara Grand Prix as a way to fine-tune her racing strategy and tweak her technique as the **2010 Nationals** rapidly approach. Breeden finished second in the 100 butterfly on Friday and competed in the 200 freestyle preliminaries Saturday morning.

Clearly, time has helped her find the silver lining on a difficult situation.

"Getting third in two events was rough," Breeden said. "Because place was so important, I didn't look at my times. I dropped a half a second from my best time. All I can do is improve, and I did that. I can't control the rest."

The **2010 NCAA Championships** proved to be the perfect setting for a rebound, and Breeden wrapped up her decorated career at Stanford in fine fashion. She successfully defended her title in the 100yd butterfly, capturing her third title in four years in that event. At the Speedo Grand Challenge last month, Breeden moved to eighth in the world with a 2:08.73 finish in the 200 butterfly.

"I definitely had a recent string of performances that re-instilled my confidence," said Breeden, who continues to train at Stanford under coach Lea Maurer. "I have a lot of competitors now, and it's not easy. Before the Olympics, I wasn't one of the spotlight swimmers. After the Olympic Trials, people expected more of me. Not making (Worlds) didn't effect me a lot, but it made it more of a surprise to others when I didn't."

Breeden recently received an NCAA post-graduate scholarship, which permits her to continue her studies at the university of her choice. She's toying with the idea of venturing abroad to Cambridge to study the classics, but only after her push to the 2012 London Games is complete. Right now, a solid performance at Nationals is her primary pursuit.

"I'm really thinking about the meet at the end of this summer," Breeden said. "That fuels me."

Related Topics:

Swimming West, 2010 Santa Clara Grand Prix, Elaine Breeden, Lea Maurer, Stanford, 2009 National Championships, 2010 National Championships, 2008 Olympics

RATE

(1 VOTES)



ADVERTISEMENT

Highest Rated

Most Discussed

06/14/2010 - **Swimming West: Katie Hoff**

06/10/2010 - **The Road to Nationals: Allison Schmitt**

06/19/2010 - **Ryan Lochte Back on the Podium**

06/18/2010 - **Natalie Coughlin Sprints in Santa Clara**

06/20/2010 - **Santa Clara Sprinter**

2008 Olympics 2009 World Championships
Beijing FINA Grand Prix Katie Hoff Men's
Michael Phelps NCAA Results Rome
 Ryan Lochte Swimming Women's World Cup

06/17/2010 - **Mercury News: Coughlin Looking Past Santa Clara to Olympics**

06/17/2010 - **UniversalSports: Santa Clara Grand Prix: Five Things to Watch**

06/15/2010 - **PaloAlto: Swim Olympians Head to Compete in Santa Clara**