



MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

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Booher Surpasses 2008 Olympic Trial Qualifying Standard

Senior timed in 23.39 in the 50-meter free at the USA Swimming National Championships

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Irvine, Calif. - Of course, University of Illinois at Chicago swimmer [Blake Booher](#) is looking forward to the 2006-2007 season, his senior year.

Now, thanks to a special performance at the USA Swimming National Championships, he is able to look forward to the 2008 U.S. Olympic Trials as well.

The Barrington native finished his 50-meter freestyle preliminary race in 23.39, surpassing the Olympic qualifying standard of 23.49. He finished in 22nd and will compete Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. (Central) at the William Woollett, Jr., Aquatic Center in Irvine, Calif., as part of the consolation final.

This is the first time a UIC swimmer has qualified for the American Olympic Trials since Brett Wilson (100-meter backstroke) and Jeff Gitten (50-meter freestyle) accomplished the feat in 1996.

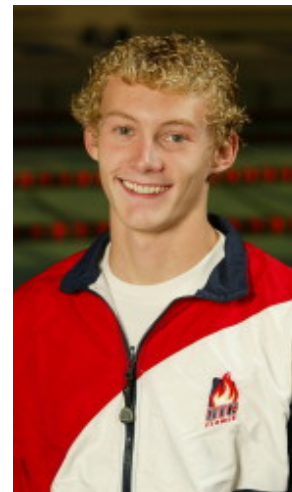
Other notable swimmers entered into the 50-meter freestyle race were American record holder Gary Hall (22.74) and Olympian Jason Lezak (22.45).

"Blake has been chasing this goal for a long time," said UIC head swimming and diving coach [Paul Moniak](#). "We are extremely proud that he reached it. It's a testament to his hard work and the help of our sprint coach, [Ina Harizanova](#)."

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Senior Blake Booher qualified for the 2008 Olympic Trials after swimming the 50-meter freestyle in 23.39