

Bernardo Herzer | USC Water Polo

Hi guys my name is Bernardo Herzer I go to the University of Southern California and I'm on the men's water polo team Some of the best pieces of advice that I've gotten are from uh current and former Olympians um in the sport Uh if it's all right I'm gonna mention uh Merrill Moses He is a 5 time Olympian in the sport and he currently coaches at Pepperdine water polo Growing up he gave me a great piece of advice that was don't be afraid to be different from everybody else Don't be afraid to train differently Don't be afraid to stand out uh stay afterwards if you need the time um and I feel like that's always been a really really important way to step forward and increase your success in the sport in training at this level I would say that the most important thing is to be aware of what you need once you've reached this level collegiately you understand what your own strengths and weaknesses are Um and being able to be vulnerable with yourself and understand what your weaknesses are and practicing and trying to improve on those is gonna be an absolute like key player to improving yourself overall One of the big things that was a transition for me between high school and college was the difference between uh weight weight room programs Um in high school I didn't have much of a weight room program I was kind of lifting on my own a little bit in college there was a big emphasis on having a routine in the weight room and doing movements outside of the pool that are gonna help your speed help your movement inside the pool That was absolutely a big difference for me Some of the challenges that I've faced um I would say one of the really big ones here is COVID uh during COVID all of the pools in California were shut down Um and I was very fortunate to be able to actually go abroad I spent a semester in Barcelona Spain I lived at a tennis academy and I trained with semi-professional teams in Spain during the time that all of the pools were closed here in California That experience really was was life changing um in high school I really enjoyed the sport and had a passion for it and when that was kind of taken away from the COVID pandemic And I really realized that I wanted to continue to pursue it and that's when I kind of made this radical change to go to Spain um secondary that showed collegiate coaches that I was dedicated um and that I really wanted it uh not that many people were willing to have such a big and radical change to continue to play their sport and to continue to develop for water polo Recruitment begins I believe um your sophomore year towards the end could be junior year now I know the rules change I didn't go to the most prestigious

high school I went to Mira Costa High School The water polo program there at the time was in division 2 I came in as the 5th goalie on the team And there were some pretty high level players ahead of me so there was definitely some challenges I was able to play on the junior varsity team my freshman year uh with aspirations to make varsity as soon as possible And as soon as I made varsity my sophomore year I started to really try to dominate that position uh in goalkeeper and then I started to get ahead on the film aspect having film sent to coaches having film available for people to watch um and I feel like that was a big booster for me Terms of recruiting water polo is sometimes a tricky sport to film I had my dad definitely film a lot for me and then whenever I was able I was using huddle uh watching the the rewinds of our own games and then creating my own clips out of huddle So that first day that recruiting was allowed for our class um I was very fortunate to receive a call from the recruiting director at USC and I continued to Work with him and a few other schools during that process I ended up taking one official visit to USC during my time in my junior year um and I actually committed to USC during my junior year so committed a little bit early I believe the statistic was I was one of the 1st 2% to commit in my class um and I feel like I always had wanted to stay close to home and really compete for a national championship so that's how I knew that USC was the choice for me USC is just such a family They create such an amazing environment in terms of the people around you the education and the balance between competing for a national championship and also pursuing the highest level of degree that you can attain During my time at USC I've been under the guidance of goalie coach Marco Pinar Um he's been amazing and has led many different uh collegiate athletes into Olympians or formed them into Olympians So I would say some of the tricks and tips that he's given me are mental strength when in the cage um and always being aware of everything around you not just the goalkeeping position Being first team all tournament was an absolute honor this last year and I would say that the biggest thing coming into this tournament it was my second NCA tournament so far in my collegiate career um and I just really came in with the mentality that I wanted to dominate I did that by Firing up my team when I could by getting saves in key moments by trying to direct my defense um and really being a presence in the cage that my team needed just a side note I think that setting goals is super important in terms of career aspirations in general Uh for myself personally I'm working to get my master's degree at USC now I redshirted my freshman year so I still currently have 2 years of eligibility left

and during those 2 years of eligibility I will be getting my master's degree in entrepreneurship and innovation And secondly one of my aspirations is to make the 2028 Olympic Games This last summer I was in Singapore competing in the World Aquatics World Championships with Team USA and I hope to continue working with Team USA towards the 2028 Olympic goal So a little bit of backstory I started working with Team USA um throughout my like youth throughout age group Um Olympic development programs have always been kind of a part of uh water polo in general attending um these big clinics um going through the age group ranks uh and more recently as I've aged out of those I've been able and very fortunate to play with the youth teams and now the senior team and that has been an absolute honor and I'm learning more and more about the balance between Playing collegiately and then stepping up to the next level playing internationally balance is key um and I hope that all coaches that players talk with during the recruiting process emphasize that The education is just as important as the goal of winning a national championship um for me personally I think the biggest thing that I could pass on would be to take the education side and the balance into your own hands uh for me that looked like taking maybe a class that was a little bit more challenging but that class counted for double the amount of credits So right now I'm in a position to graduate early from USC and that's why I'm able to get my master's degree Um just by being proactive in my search for courses being proactive in my scheduling um and working with the people that wanna help you in terms of advising I'm gonna start off with water polo is definitely not the biggest money generating or revenue generating sport so NIL can be a little bit tougher uh for water polo But I definitely like to use Influencer for all of the media that they provide us with and then secondarily I've definitely been able to source a few I would say less than 5 deals on influencer so far Uh but I hope that I will continue to work with people on the platform and that as I get these opportunities that more will open up I would say that I would definitely wanna work with maybe a bigger brand like Yeti or somebody that could provide us as a team with uh hydration and bottles for on deck I think that that would be one of the biggest things I think the biggest piece of advice is it's gonna be difficult um and it's gonna be hard But make sure that you're always having fun throughout times in my career from where I've gotten to now there have been times where maybe I've gotten a little bit caught up in the sport a little bit caught up in a tournament or a training or something going on Always remember to take a step back and have fun with the people around you the

people that are going through this difficult training this difficult tournament with you um and then that way you're always able to push through and really Attain your goal Hi my name is Bernardo Herzer I go to the University of Southern California and I play water polo