

BEARCAT SWIM CLUB – HIGH ALTITUDE TRAINING TRIP, ARIZONA 2010

Daily Log written by Bearcat swimmers

Pictures can be found on Bearcat Facebook page, check 'em out!

June 24, 2010

Day 1

Today, fourteen of us Bearcats got up at 4am to fly to Arizona for our training trip. We all met up at the airport wearing our matching blue t-shirts with a drawing of each of our faces printed on them – a design that offended some, flattered others, and for the most part showed the world what a creative group of individuals we are, (and how much we need to institute a Bearcat Art Class).

We waited for our plane for about an hour, during which time we took some team pictures, drew numerous portraits of Craig, and heard the best quote of the day from Mackenzie: "Kyle, did you take my pants?!"

When we landed in Phoenix three hours later, we were welcomed with 105° weather, which was a nice change from the usual 50° rain in Oregon. We drove another 2.5 hours to get to Flagstaff, where we checked in to our dorms at Northern Arizona University. We practiced in the long course pool, and learned what it feels like to breathe 7000 feet above sea level. I hope our lungs get acclimated soon, because so far just walking up the stairs puts us all out of breath!

Written by Eamon Ford

June 25, 2010

Day 2

This morning we awoke feeling the effects of the previously exhausting day and the altitude. We met upstairs at 6:45 and these effects became quite evident. We were all quiet and obviously tired. We took our first journey via foot! Breakfast consisted of waffles, potatoes, eggs and sausage! Many commented that it was not as satisfying as the dinner the previous night, but i was quite happy with my cheerios and chocolate milk! After breakfast, we walked to the pool for practice one of two that day. As we approached the door, a glimmer of hope filled the swimmers eyes as the door was seemingly locked. However, much to our dismay, Craig came to our rescue, and led us to the side door.

Practice was tiring and afterwards we had dryland training! We all met on the lawn behind the pool. The grass was less than satisfactory. We were all hoping to get a tan, so we were training in our sports bras and the guys in their speedos. Unfortunately we did not get too much color. However! We might be featured on the local news! About half way through, two college aged boys decided to document the occasion on their video camera! gross. After we worked on our washboard abs we did something that us senior bearcat swimmers aren't used to-we stretched! It was relaxing, and necessary after all of our crazy hard work in the pool and at dryland.

After dry land, we went to lunch then back to the dorms for a much needed nap! We all slept for about three hours before it was off to the pool for another workout. The walk to the pool held a surprise for us. In the midst of an 80 degree day, there was a short and refreshing storm on the way to practice, it wasn't too bad, we're used to the water. And i guess we aren't as far from oregon as we thought! It really felt like home.

We played ultimate frisbee behind our dorms. We met some fun dutch friends-Stewart, Tim, and George! They were really nice. At around 8:30 we had our first round table swimming discussion. The topic for the night as provided by Coach Craig was the question "why do you swim?" We all shared our journeys of how we got to where we are, and why we stay. We learned a lot about each other even our coach! We all were anxious to head to bed after this. We all headed off with our roommates, called our families, and now were headed to bed. Goodnight!

Written by Brooke Mischkot and Emma Harnisch

June 26, 2010

Day 3

"Rise and shine Bearcat swimmers, it's day three!" We all awoke this morning feeling a bit sluggish as the runny nose and sore body made its way around the team. There was a mutual feeling of gratitude when we realized there was only one practice for the day and then it was off to fun. To top off the good mood the one and only practice was hard, but really fun! After practice we did dry-land and worked on our soon to be six pack abs.

The big plan for the day was to head off to the Arizona Snow Bowl to ride the ski lift to the top of the mountain, as if we weren't high enough already. We were all ecstatic for lunch as we had been working our tails off all day. Not one of us could even wait until we had reached the top of the ski lift to open the box lunches that we were given. To our surprise this lunch was deeeelishhhhhhousss. You could just tell how much everyone was loving it by flying tomatoes, apples, and other miscellaneous lunch foods off the side of the ski lift and down the mountain.

We were all excited to see the famous flagstaff fire when we got to the top of the mountain, but sadly we were disappointed. All the trails that lead anywhere near the fire were closed off. After everybody had their share of sight seeing, and Eamon got to touch the lonely snow pile, and were headed to the ski lift to get back down to the lodge. Only one loss on the ride back down ski lift (other than food), Tori dropped her camera.

Once we got back to NAU we decided to lay out in the sun and get our tan on. Some accomplished this, others just turned very very red. We headed down dinner (which was also delicious) then off to the movies! Upon popular demand we saw Toy Story 3. It was very cute with lots of laughs from all. We got back to the dorms around 830, and all decided that is was definitely time for bed.

Written by Tori Simenec and Carol Herz

June 27, 2010

Day 4

This morning we woke up ready for two two-hour practices. It would be the first for many of us to have a practice on Sunday. Sluggishly walking over to breakfast we talked amongst each other, hoping for the pool to be closed. Much to our surprise, the front door was locked. There were still two more side doors to be checked before we could be free of our scheduled Sunday practices. They were LOCKED! We were flabbergasted. Coach Craig had a little bit of a different reaction to our joyful experience. Little did we know, we didn't get out of everything. We came back to to dorms and ran 3+ miles in 85 degree weather. Then we worked on our soon to be six pack abs and buns of steel. As we stood, dripping in sweat, waiting for Coach Craig's plan for the rest of the day...he informed us that we only had 45 minutes to get cleaned up for our trip to National Slide Rock Park.

Once we arrived at the park we waited in line for half an hour. The weather was 98 and sunny. Not a cloud in the sky. We walked down to find a place to unpack and apply sunscreen to glowing white bodies before we turned into dried tomatoes:). We began our exploration of the river and its natural water slides. We all tried to find the biggest rock to jump off of. Joe won. He found a 40 foot rock and was the first to jump off followed by many others. Our day at the park consisted of rocks, slides, sunburns, scrapes and bruises. Comes to show everyone else how tough the Bearcats are! We then came back to the dorms and washed off the Sedona rock and then proceeded to dress up. We had dinner at the Lumberyard Brewery in Flagstaff. We separated into two tables started off with two big plates of cheese fries. They were DELICIOUS! Some of us who were done before the other table, decided to walk around town for a few minutes, which was not enough time. We actually found out there was a town in Flagstaff after the 4th day being trapped on campus! The team then went out for ColdStone ice cream and headed back for a good nights rest to prepare ourselves for tomorrows daily doubles!

Written by Crystal Kibby and Allie Rasmussen

June 28, 2010

Day 5

This morning, the morning of our second daily doubles and also the half way point of our trip. Started out at 7 with breakfast which we were a little late to because some of us forgot to turn in our phones for the day, but after that we were off to practice number one. Fortunately, this morning the doors were open and we started out the week with a grueling 8x800 fastest possible average. Many of us kicked that set in the butt. Then it was off to dryland, working are almost 6 pack abs. After that we had an hour before heading to lunch, many people hung out in our rooms, or laying in the sun like Carol did, getting a perfect burn outline of her sports bra.

We returned after lunch to our dorms where many took advantage of the 2 hours and napped before practice number two. This practice was the first practice we used our fins and worked our already tired legs. After practice we headed to dinner where we gobbled our food down and rushed back to the dorms to watch *The Bachelorette* while others did laundry and made movies.

Then before heading off to bed, we all gathered for a round table discussion the topic, your goals, and also team and group goals. The discussion went well and pulled the group closer as we now know everyone's goals for swimming. Once the discussion ended, things did not settle down much as we were all excited for the grand canyon the next day and not having practice, one room even had a dance party, but slowly we went to sleep as tomorrow was full of new adventures.

Written by Emma Dow

June 29, 2010

Day 6

Once upon a time...14 undeniably awe-inspiring athletes slept in 20 minutes later. It was awesome. Today was the day that we would be freed from the bondage of any kind of workout...supposedly. We headed off with our 20 minutes of extra sleep (which probably didn't make a difference since we stayed up 2 hours later than usual the night before) to feast once again on delicious breakfast items (mostly fruit, eggs, and cereal). Despite how amazing the food was, none of us could get our minds off of the day to come.

After breakfast (and getting told to take all food out of our pockets/shirts by the lunch lady), we started off to our final fun destination...THE GRAND CANYON!!! So what if we had to sit in a car for almost 2 hours looking at nothing but sand and so-called national forests that consisted of 2 feet tall brown shrubs (guess Arizona forests are different then ours), we were going to one of the 7 natural wonders of the world to spend a day exploring. The ride their was interesting to say the least. We listened to Navajo music on the radio, scared people out of their sleep, and yes of course, made fun of Craig's driving a bit.

The Grand Canyon was very astonishing, I guess thats why they call it the "Grand" Canyon. The fact that we didn't have to practice mixed with the excitement of seeing such an amazing view made for 16 joyous attitudes. While there we made our first stop by the Southern Rim (the first up close look at the canyon for many of us). Looking down and across the massive gap in the middle of Arizona was incredible, and frightening at the same time. It was in everyones mind that one false step would send you hurdling down to the bottom where a very large chance of death would be upon you. Amongst all the excitement Eamon, being Eamon, decided to go stand by the edge to get a picture taken as if he was falling. Just after the photo was taken a funny, older, man walked by and made the witty remark, "If you fall you will be able to fly for the rest of your life!" Everyone that heard him couldn't help but laugh. To our utter excitement, Craig decided it would be such a great time to keep walking farther and farther, from view point to view point, across the perimeter of the Grand Canyon. Craig, being the optimist that he is, thought that around every corner there would be a new, and breathtaking view. Sadly most of us swimmers realized half way through the walk that it wasn't going to get much better, we were just going to see the same rock from a different angle.

When we had finished blazing our trails through the canyon, we headed back to the cafeteria to fill up on water and use the bathrooms before heading back to our humble abode known as Flagstaff. The ride was a little bit different on the return trip from the canyon. Most of us took the time to get in a nap (or play Monkey on our ipods) or just take in the 90s rock that Craig had found on the radio. When we arrived back in Flagstaff, we decided to take a night off of cafeteria food and stop at a local diner downtown for malts and burgers. I'm not going to lie, it was a little sketchy at first. But by the end of the meal, everyone was well satisfied with the meal that they had just inhaled. Once back to the dorms on campus, everyone spilt their own way to watch "Wipeout", do their laundry, or have some time alone. All in all, it was a great day. We are lucky to have such a great group of people on this trip. 4 more days!!!! May the force be with us as we go into 3 days of 2 hour doubles with who knows how much dry land. Good night, and good riddance.

Written by Kyle Wicks and Joe Reedy

June 30, 2010

Day 7

Rise and shine bearcat swimmers, it is day 7! Today is was the first of three days with 2 2hour practices. After our adventurous day at the Grand Canyon, we were all starting to feel our effects of dehydration. Four of us were especially feeling the effects more than others. Our symptoms included: numerous trips to the garbage can and bath room! With these painful and exhausting symptoms us four did not complete our first of 3 daily doubles. Also that morning Craig announced that we would be doing the set "beat the clock" that afternoon. A team favorite. The people that were out sick were very upset when they heard the news, but then Craig changed it to Friday night! Finally, Craig had one more announce meant that nobody knew was coming. Craig quoted " Instead of doing our normal group dryland, you will now be responsible of doing 400 crunches and 100 push-ups daily. With a grand totally of 1200 crunches and 300 push-ups by Friday."

We headed back to the dorms to start those crunches and push-ups. Everyone chose to do it a little different. Some chose to breeze through it while others took the social route and not doing it at all.

Next was lunch. We are all thinking about those poor four girls that were left at the dorm sleeping. We got this idea that they needed a little something to munch on. We had all gotten a talk the first night by the manager because we were not allowed to take food, but this didn't stop us. We were determined to bring back a few slices of bread for the sick ones. One fine young man decided that he would distract the mean cafeteria lady by going out the entrance rather than the exit. This gave us a chance sneak out the bread while she was distracted by our brave teammate. Our mission was accomplished, and we were all ready to hit the hay so we could prepare for our nights practice.

While walking to practice that night we all had the thought in our head that we would not be doing "beat the clock", but we all assumed that practice would still be supper challenging. To our surprise we found practice challenging but not as much as we expected.

To finish our night off we had our 3rd round table discussion. The topic of that night was "What does your personalty bring to the pool and how does it help others?". This was a very deep and conflicting discussion. It opened us up to our team mates and coaches. We had many very in depth debates and we learned a lot about each other and what makes us tick. We all left the room that night a different person than we came into it. We all had different thoughts about each other now that we had learned so much about them.

We have accomplished an overcome one week in Arizona, and 3 days to go! We have all been murmuring about how excited we are to get back to Oregon to our beds, showers, oxygen and loved ones. Day 7 complicated, keep going bearcats, stay hydrated and and healthy!

Written by Mackenzie Rumrill & Audrey Cage

July 1, 2010

Day 8

CHOO CHOO!! All aboard the crazy train! As a result of day two into our three days of doubles, many of us have boarded . . .

We woke up at a very early 6:30 and got ready for the day. Breakfast was as usual-- quiet! After our peaceful breakfast we headed out to the pool for our first of two long practices. Our main focus of the morning was kicking our legs off; we barely made our way back to the dorms! Goals for this afternoons practice were of topic when we were finished with our long kick sets.

Once we arrived to our temporary homes, some people went outside to work on there 400 or more crunches and 100 pushups while others chugged apple juice while only thinking about our crunches and pushups. Then we made our way to the cafeteria for lunch and we finally scored and got cheese raviolis that were delicious. Once everyone was done with their meal, walk number four back to the dorms was upon us.

Nap time! Just about everyone took a much needed and appreciated nap for the two and a half hours we had before our next grueling practice. Off onto walk number five and practice number two!!

Practice consisted of a few sprint sets, despite our super dead legs from this morning. We found that the crazy train was waiting for us in the locker rooms! Tori and Emma were on a mad karaoke spree when Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen came on, we were all singing it throughout the rest of the night!

Dinner was fun, Joe tried his first bites of tofu and enjoyed it and we all had some fun conversations.

Walking back to the dorms for the sixth time that day seemed like an eternity! Some went straight for Wipeout! while others visited with family or each other. Outside their was an intense game of UNO and the painful, but oh so satisfying game of Korean Hand Slapping (provided by Kyle). Later a group went down to put laundry in, which turned into an outrageously awesome dance party! We learned many new moves by our very own Tori and Brooke, including The Jerk (some are still perfecting this move.)

And now we are all counting down the practices to the finish line! Three more to go, Bearcats!! Good night!

Written by Emma Harnisch & Allie Rasmussen

July 2, 2010

Day 9

I could start this log of our day like every other, but I think by now you have probably figured out the gist of what happens every morning. 6:30 came way too quickly, all athletes were groggy, and we walked to breakfast in some sort of natural high; this is how our mornings were when we did doubles, and this was our 3rd double day in a row. It was painful. Some didn't even make it. But the majority of the Bearcat athletes stepped up once again and showed what we were really made of: awesomeness.

Our morning practice was unusually consistent with the two previous ones. Most of us described it as leg numbers (or at least I did) because with the lack of oxygen combined with the 2000 meter kick set, you couldn't feel your thighs if you wanted to. We ended the practice with an awesome distance set (my favorite!). We were thrown an unexpected surprise when Craig decided to cut off the last round of the set due to us already being over our time in the pool by 20 minutes. Craig loves to get as much time as he can in the pool. So most of those 2 hour practices, were more like 2 and 1/4 to 2 and 1/2 in actuality.

After practice we made our treacherous hike back to the dorms to start our 400 crunches and 100 push-ups...or 800 and 200...or 1200 and 300. The number of exercises that a swimmer had to depended on how motivated they were the 2 days before. These 1200 crunches and 300 push-ups were due by the end of practice. Some of us had a tidbit of work to do. That's what most of us spent our time doing between the practices. Oh, did I mention the 2 hour nap we also somehow were able to fit in? That was pretty nice.

Our night practice consisted of a group favorite set (Eamon and I still can't figure out why though) known as "Beat the Clock". Basically, you sprint as many 100 freestyles as you possibly can before you miss the interval. This was especially enjoyable at 7000 feet of altitude. In the end, all put in their best effort and Craig was pleased, which is always high on the goals of the athletes for every practice. If the coach is happy, you probably did a pretty dang good job.

We finished up our last dinner at the cafeteria. We all left teary eyed. Some even had to be sedated to get them away from the buffet line...*cough* Eamon *cough* *cough*. When we finally made it

back to the dorms we finished our last Round Table Discussion. Tonight's topic was mainly anything and everything about swimming an athlete wanted to bring up. We talked about motivation and what made the best swimmers in the world the best.

We then all headed off to our rooms for some time of reflection on the past 3 days of doubles. It was hard... It was dangerous... It was stunning. Good job bearcats. You are all studs in our minds. One more practice tomorrow! Sprint it out!!!

Written by Kyle Wicks & Eamon Ford

July 3, 2010

Day 10

Every single one of us was more than a little giddy this morning as we woke up and realized today was our last day. There was an apparent new skip in the steps of the Bearcat swimmers as we made our FINAL journey from the luxurious Gabaldon dorms to breakfast. Every single morning someone, usually Crystal, makes the comment that they're missing a little bacon in their diet. This morning the need for bacon was finally met. This was shaping up to be a great day.

Now at the pool, we all were wide eyed, awaiting the beginning of our three, yes three, hour practice. Warm up finished, the main set was presented; a crazy IM set that was the equivalent to the number of feet we were above sea level, 6800. This last set was destroyed by every swimmer in the pool, it was a set that as a team, we could all be proud of. For our last half hour we pretty much went a little wild. We played a nice little trivia game with Craig and headed straight for the high dives which had been calling our names from day one. Even little Allie took the plunge with a little squeak flailing into the water. We got some great pics with Mac's underwater camera then hurried out of the pool for the last time. Hoorah.

Our lunch was a whirl wind of junk food and root beer floats that over flowed and came out our noses. With full bellies and so much energy, knowing we were done swimming at altitude, we headed for Flagstaff for a little shopping. You know, getting rid of that tiny bit of extra money our parents gave us before we had to give it back. Shhhh. One car headed back a little early while Craig's car took a fun little drive to pass the time. We jammed to some awesome music and drove to the dome dome dome dommmmmeeeee which we climbed until Eamon spotted the sign, "do not climb, you will be prosecuted".

We were all then in for another stop to the pool. Not for swimming this time, but to take part in a tradition some of the best swimmers in the world have done. The weight room wall had signatures of all the most famous swimmers most aspire to be including the Japanese, Swedish, Canadian, and American National Teams. Our very own artist Emma Harnisch drew our Bearcat logo with sharpie on one wall in the most perfect spot and each one of us added our name to the wall amongst the best of the best. Who knows, some day aspiring teenagers like our selves could be searching for our names on the wall.

To finish off the night we celebrated Kevin's birthday; the big two-one. We indulged in pizza and chocolate cake and were treated to a performance of a Michael Jackson impersonation by our very own birthday boy. It was complete with every one of Michael's famous moves, including the moon walk and hip thrust. No one could do it better but Mr. Jackson himself.

All packed up and ready for the trip home we spent some final moments together in the NAU dorms in our favorite town of Flagstaff, Arizona. The gals went out for our final attempt at a tan and our own

version of a “Round Table Discussion”. The night was over as well as the trip. It was the general consensus that it was time to go home, to our own beds, our own food, and our own potties. But was also true that deep down we enjoyed the time we were privileged to spend here and the moments we were all able to share. Each one of us is able to leave a different swimmer than we arrived. We’ve gotten to be a stronger team, a faster team, and a team that likes each other even more than we did before we came to Flagstaff. Ten days being with the same people brought out unexpected qualities in each of us that helped us to grow closer and appreciate the uniqueness each has to offer. Who knew Carol was so darn funny? Who knew Emma Harnisch was our own Picasso? Who knew Kevin was the next King of pop? Who knew Kate could drink nine water bottles? Who knew Tori was such a fabulous skin doctor? Who knew Emma Dow was team mama? Who knew Joe was such a ladies man? Oh wait we all did. Who knew Eamon was so directionally challenged, “Where’s the pool again”? Who knew Crystal liked bacon so much!? Who knew Allie could burp like that? Who knew Mac could be so feisty? Who knew Brooke could bust a move? Who knew Kyle was afraid of heights? And who knew Audrey could pull off such a phone marathon? It’s these things along with many others that made the trip special and made the memories that will last. Thank you to all who helped make this trip possible and contributed to the great times we were able to have. Our last day here has come to an end, but we will take away the things we have learned here.

See ya NAU, Thanks for having us.

Written by Crystal Kibby & Tori Simenec

July 4, 2010

Day 11

It’s time to come home Bearcat swimmers! The day had an early start – 3:30AM! We had to wake early to make the two hour drive from Flagstaff to Phoenix to catch our plane. Luckily for the swimmers they slept the entire ride; but for us coaches, we had the pleasure of watching the sun rise in the high desert. The temperature in Flagstaff that morning was 42 and by the time we dropped in elevation to Phoenix the temp climbed to 82 at 6:00AM. Glad we flew out before the mid-day high of 110.

Made the routine check of luggage and obtaining tickets then it was off through security and finally – breakfast!! Finally, something other than eggs and cereal! Everyone for themselves. We boarded the plane and finally, coaches got to nap en route to San Jose for our connecting flight. Upon arrival in San Jose it was lunch time – yet another meal at the airport. Unfortunately in the newly-remodeled San Jose airport, most places were closed being Independence Day. Everyone found a sandwich shop and made the best of it.

It was a 2 ½ layover that was then delayed another 15 minutes. Swimmers talked, napped, walked around, listened to music and played games. You could tell everyone was ready to be home. Finally time to board the plane to Portland. But wait! Allie, Mackenzie, and Emma H. were in line for Jamba Juice. They made their orders and paid for the refreshing drink. But no drink in hand and the plane was boarding. They made the choice to board the plane and forget about the fruity juice they paid for but never got!

Stories and jokes were told on the way home. Questions about what were you doing for the 4th that evening took place and conversations of swimmers missing their parents were highly discussed en route to PDX. I too was eager to arrive back to Salem. It’s been 11 years since the life of living in a dorm and eating cafeteria food was a routine. I think I would have been okay without having to revisit that!

As we landed, we were eager to get off the plane. Family and friends greeted the team at luggage pick up. The training trip had come to a close. Everyone went their separate ways to celebrate and have time with family and friends for the Nation's holiday. Because the next morning we were back in the pool!

What a "grand" experience for the Bearcats. These swimmers gained: the training opportunity of a lifetime at the toughest place to train in the world, independence and responsibility, learning to travel, a focus on specifics in swimming and working towards goals, improvement and confidence in swimming, seeing the next step in swimming at a college, life changing skills, memories, developing new friendships and strengthening others, and learning what it's all about to train and work cooperatively together a TEAM. The everyday moments of fun and happiness, successes and failures, good times and bad times are all a part of growing up and learning about oneself. I believe the Bearcats left the airport this day more mature, more responsible, and more focused and determined. These swimmers realized this was a life-changing experience. It will last them a lifetime!

Good work Bearcat swimmers! And here we come championship season!!!

Where to next?! Stay tuned...

Written by Coach Craig