



## **What the Olympics and Ocala Have in Common**

(Ocala, FL, June 26, 2024) - It's no secret the 2024 Summer Olympics are on the horizon in Paris, France. Spectators worldwide will tune in to watch the world's best athletes compete for the gold. Every quadrennial, swimming earns its eight-day mega-spotlight and is one of the most-viewed and popular events during the Olympic games.

What do the Olympics and Ocala have in common? Ocala is home to Florida Aquatics Swimming & Training (FAST), the premier aquatic center with Olympic ties. Let's break it down.

### **FAST is home to the 2021 U.S. Olympic Trials Warm-Up Pool.**

Following the 2021 U.S. Olympic Trials, the Myrtha® warm-up pool was packaged and shipped to its new home at FAST. The "L" shaped pool is strategically placed outdoors, allowing multiple activities to concur simultaneously, including swimming lessons, practice, or warm-up/warm-down for competition meets. Only a handful of aquatic centers worldwide have custom-made Olympic Trials pools.

### **The FAST staff has Olympic coaches and competitors.**

Aquatic Programs Director Dr. Gemma (Spofforth) Fleming represented Great Britain in the 2008 and 2012 Olympics. She is the former world record holder and 2009 world champion in the 100-meter backstroke and has eight medals in major international championships.

FAST Falcons Head Coach Allison Beebe has coached multiple nationally ranked swimmers and seven first-time U.S. Olympic Trials qualifiers, one of whom (Simone Manuel) won an Olympic gold medal.

Director of International Relations Gregg Troy served as an Assistant Coach for the 1996, 2008, and 2021 U.S. Olympic Swim teams and Head Coach for the 2012 Men's U.S. Olympic Swim team. Coach Troy has coached over 75 Olympians, including Caeleb Dressel, Ryan Lochte, and Elizabeth Beisel.

### **The FAST Falcons were represented at the 2024 U.S. Olympic Trials in Indianapolis.**

In just two years since the FAST Falcons competitive swim team was created, Grant Sanders represented the FAST Falcons by qualifying and competing in the 2024 U.S. Olympic Trials in Indianapolis. Under the direction of Coach Beebe, Grant competed in the 200-meter Individual Medley (IM), 400-meter IM, 200-meter butterfly, and 200-meter breaststroke. Grant placed 20th in the 400-meter IM, 54th in the 200-meter fly, 48th in the 200-meter breaststroke, and 19th in the 200-meter IM.

“We are very proud of Grant’s performance at the 2024 U.S. Olympic Trials! This was the fastest U.S. Trials in history, and Grant placed in the top 20 for two events. We look forward to future Falcons following in his footsteps,” Head Coach Allison Beebe states.

**Olympians have been spotted competing at the FAST pool.**

FAST has become a top contender for hosting big-name competitions, which attract big-name competitors. Notable Olympians spotted competing at FAST have included Katie Ledecky, Calae Dressel, Bobby Finke, and Emma Weyant.

Cheer on the swimming greats with us as “France Comes to FAST!” Join us on Sunday, July 28, from 1:30-5 PM and Sunday, August 4, from 11:30 AM-3 PM as we cheer on the swimming champions. These events are open to the public and free for FAST members. For more information, please visit <https://floridafast.com/events/france-comes-to-fast/>.



The 2021 U.S. Olympic Trials Myrtha® Warm-Up Pool serves as the outdoor pool at FAST.  
Photo courtesy of Florida Aquatics Swimming & Training.



Grant Sanders represented the FAST Falcons at the 2024 U.S. Olympics Trials in Indianapolis this June. Photo courtesy of Florida Aquatics Swimming & Training.