

Notes from the Indianapolis **ADVANCED BREASTSTROKE CLINIC**

[NOTES BY ABRAHAM "TITO" SOLANO, FEATURED SPEAKER, DR. DAVID SALO]

HISTORY OF THE BREASTSTROKE SPEAKER: John Leonard

Freestyler Charles Daniels' 1905 had similar stroke as Alex Popov. So, strokes come back like Kiefer in the 30's and then Rick Carey in the 80's. Video by Doc Counsilman from the 50's shows foot over the other foot in the streamline on breaststroke. Knees really go forward but hips are always up. Hands are very deep in the water. The glide is there but with the head up. Wide pull with hands not exactly simultaneous; sweeping under the elbow. Also, late kick after the pull. Five years later another video shows female doing a very deep pull. Techniques that are still being used fifty to sixty years later.

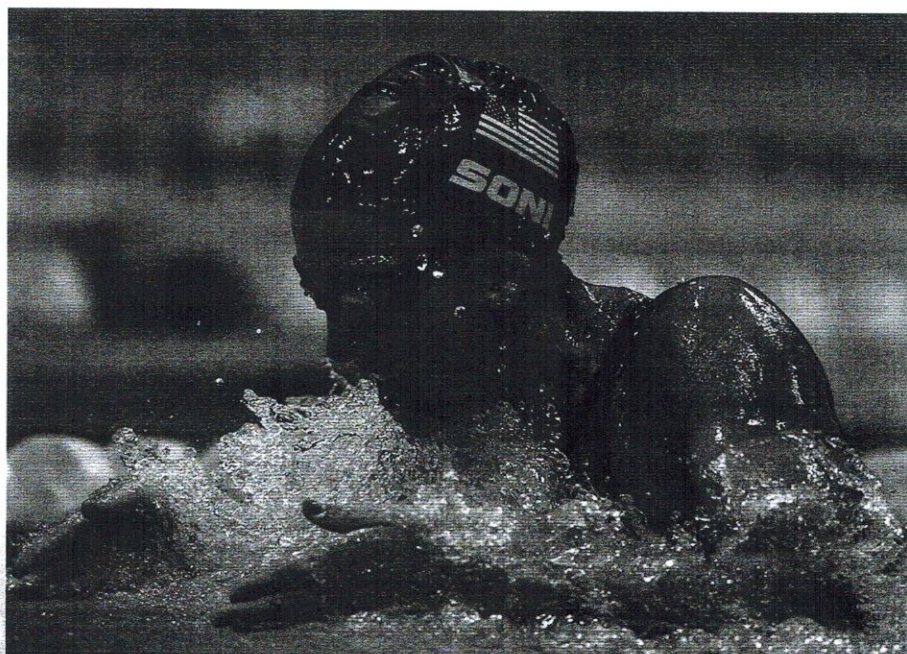
Another from the 1980's shows Tracy Caulkins' breaststroke pressing the chest, raising the hips, deeper hands. Four years later, video shows her body roll, not flat, lots of hip thrust. Also, Steve Lundquist, showed wide pull, wide kick. Knees go forward ninety degrees. In 1992, Anita Nall swims predominantly powered by kick stroke. Eyes looking forward, sweeping in the forearms. Surge and reach, influenced by Barrowman. Her tempo is faster. In 2000, Megan Quann also has a quick tempo but starts looking down, more power on arms.

Training today has an influence from East Germans as far as intensity. Remember history repeats itself. D Salo has been using that intensity for more than a decade. In the 90's, Mike Barrowman's breaststroke used the wave breaststroke with using the body and a narrower kick. Nelson Diebel has a stroke where he leads with the head. Over the years head position continues to change: currently head in line with the spine.

TRAINING AND VIDEO ANALYSIS OF ELITE BREASTSTROKERS SPEAKER: Dave Salo

Most coaches are afraid of teaching breaststroke. Staciana Stits: very strong and rigid in mechanics; not flexible. Hardy: great strength and fantastic athlete; great racer. She is working on keeping the back flat currently and swimming more in control.

Beard as a 10 year old was a flyer and joined the Novas to do well in the summer league.



She has a little downward motion but her alignment is great, back is flat. He doesn't like her stroke that much (jokingly) - gets up too high and brings the shoulders up very high; but she has a great kick. Lower back needs to be in line, most neutral, pushing the belly bottom towards the spine, the least resistance. She learned the Barrowman stroke. She is very flexible.

Kitajima is an example of efficiency. In breaststroke splashing in front or around needs to be minimized, like Kitajima. He finishes the kick and brings the legs in line.

Digging into the in sweep and shooting forward Straight not down. In recovery phase turn the hands into the extension to better feel the pressure to connect to the hips going forward and bringing the heels up. The pitch of the hands is critical to the start of the in sweep. He recognizes the hand's need to be quite engaged in the recovery before the kick takes place. He does not teach a streamline on the recovery. He refers to the size of the vessel being minimized. He feels communicating breaststroke to a 10 and under is quite a challenge.

The quick kick drill: head is up, the heels drive this because you wear a pull buoy, quick catch high elbows, back is flat, high elbows, fast heels. Also, breast swim with a snorkel. Swirl with resistance. Breast pull with dolphin kick or flutter kick.

Young breaststrokers like to lead with the head. He rather has them drive with the shoulders. Let the head take a ride: let it relax. Brendan Hansen keeps the head up for longer. Younger kids can't balance things like that.

Shanteau is rigid in doing that. He suggest focusing on the heel more than the knee. He uses egg beater kick, piston kick (heels do the speed work) - water polo drills for quick recovery of the legs. Straight propulsion kick back. Teach the mechanics. Many swimmers make the mistake of a direct catch. Elbows follow the hands; a very circular motion. Elbows come towards the side and then push the body forward.

Rebecca Soni comes along and was afraid of Dave challenging her stroke. Dave points out Russian swimmer now training with Soni who has three different strokes: one for the 50, one for the 100, and one for the 200. Soni does lots of middle and long sprint work. Not a lot of

Advanced Breaststroke Clinic, Indianapolis (Continued)

breaststroke in practice. He does quick drills and pace breaststroke. He analyzed her stroke and hardly made corrections. Not a wide kick and is very quick. He is not a split, stroke count kind of coach; with her he is. Her alignment is great; her core is very strong and has a very good connection with her kick. Pilates and stabilization work. Body position and up-tempo is her strength. No deceleration.

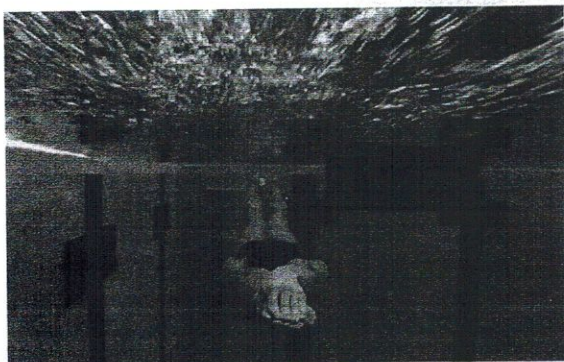
Breaststroke kick: "How wide should the kick be?" He said, "I don't know." Turn heels and toes out, accelerate them. Heels drive the kick. Heels toward the hips quickly - to minimize drag and accentuate power - without getting them out of the water. Reducing passive drag (drag created by the limbs in motion).

Ed Moses feels the kick pressure from the inside of the leg not just from the bottom of the feet. When breaststrokers feel their stroke is "gone" it is a matter of timing. Dave loves drills for breaststroke not training lots of it. He trains the physiology. More race pace training and drills. Breast pull with free kick. Breathing control exercises resistance.

Training: Faster pace, teach mechanics of the race; again, train the physiology. Triangle exercise - 30 seconds, six times. Go down breast kick in a streamline, two flip turns, push-up breast kick, five second kick from the core, then free kick breast pull fast. Follow that with three 50's pace breast on 50 seconds trying to go the last fifty times in a 200. Getting metabolic system ready and then get the most out of the swimmers.

- **Exercise/Game:** 62's in 12 ft water, vertical kicking doing flip turns on the bottom - two to six times.
- **Another Game/Exercise:** Using a kickboard and a bottle of water, vent the bottle without touching it for 50 m and then kick a 50 all out - six times. Muscles get fatigue and impact the performance of swimming
- **Drill:** Trailing butterfly kick with breast full, upper body doing the work, using the shoulders and core for propulsion. Also, sculling V 6 (no kick), working the small muscles, bring one leg out - working the core, stabilization and balance.

In order to swim fast, you have to train faster; drag increases exponentially. Training 25's, 50's, 75's, 100's, 125's. Younger kids need to train technique. Short distances and give feedback. His workouts are intense.



SPEAKER: Mark Russell

Most elite breast swimmers have this in common: the forward movement of the box and the recovery of the arms happen before the kick. Breathe with the shoulder. Elite breaststrokers' speed - the difference between the 100 and 200 breast - determined by the speed of the heels and the amount of gliding not the speed of the hands. Teach swimmers to feel the drive forward by engaging the core and the hip. People usually kick down because they drive their hands down. Under water pull out. Mark suggests the kick to take place before the pull out; after a quick streamline and separating the hands.

John Leonard on TEACHING BREASTSTROKE:

Our job is to grow a bigger toolbox to do better coaching. Always stay open-minded. John establishes a rapport with children for five minutes by asking about their day, sitting on a chair for better eye level - communication. He works quality repetition defined by meaningful feedback.

Teaching Breaststroke - Start with the kick (no kickboards), add the pull, then at the timing of the stroke. Keep in mind there is a momentary dead spot in propulsion. 1.6 seconds per cycle:

1. Heels up, toes out (fan the toes outward).
2. Kick down, back and around.
3. Squeeze the legs and finish the kick at the end.
4. Toe point at the end of the kick and start of the recovery.
5. Suggestion from the group on teaching the kick: grab the ankles vs. the feet when manipulating the feet.

Developing the Pull

1. Hands outside the elbows.
2. When the hand goes under below, begin the recovery.
3. Recovery with the arms under water.
4. Maximum number of reps done correctly.
5. Thumbs together, hands pitch up, lean elbows up, press wide, hands under the elbow, fingers down.

Timing the Stroke

Kick, stretch and pull (he doesn't like using the word glide; he feels that sounds passive). Teach the athlete to ride the legs and kick a needle forward and then pull a needle forward. (Kick, stretch, count to 1, or 3, explain series.) Breast pull dolphin kick or flutter kick helps with hand speed. Short sprints doing that. Being disqualified is a learning opportunity for parents and children.

Teaching Strategies:

Take risks and be adventurous. For example: Running dives to improve streamline. The way we teach needs to be different. Educate and entertain. Use your own style; yourself. No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care. *One cares how much you know if you can't teach it.*

You don't have to give phony praise, you don't have to be sweet. Captivate children's attention and keep it! Quality, meaningful feedback is critical to success. Read "Teaching as Leadership" by Steven Farr. Praise effort, not talent! Effort will give you results.

To establish motivation: **autonomy** (independence), **mastery** (relearning process) and **purpose** (bigger than self). Example: skateboarding = independent learning.

Repetition is everything; practice makes perfect. There is a limited amount of stroke correction we can do. - "The Talent Code" by Daniel Coyle.

Fast-paced learning environment promotes focus. Speed of mind, speed of speaking, speed of comprehension. **Pace, rhythm, tempo. Short, quick and constant phrases.** Kids learn visually. Do or not do, there is no "try."

Teaching is a Sale. Sales come from a transfer of emotion. Energy and effort and excitement make the sale to learners.

Make your purpose and intent clear. We are here to teach and kids are here to learn.

You never know when it will be learned. It may be on the first try, or it may be on the 1,000th time. **Never give up on a child.** ■