



Off The Blocks

October 2014

ROW NOT ONLY PRODUCES GREAT SWIMMERS, WE DEVELOP GREAT PEOPLE!

DIVE ON IN!

A Note From Our President

by Alex Berton

The swim season has started and all the groups are in the water working hard. I am looking forward to the Fall First Try meet. It is an exciting time. I want to remind everyone that the Fall First Try meet is our annual PB and Jam food drive for the food bank. Please bring a non-perishable food item to donate to the food bank.

Your board of directors has come up with an exciting new exchange program. It involves any ROW medals that you no longer want. We are going to set up an exchange for these unwanted medals. We will be exchanging medals for a Subway Gift Card. If you bring in 5 ROW medals which are

still in good condition with the ribbon attached, we will give you a \$5 dollar gift card. The medals can be delivered to Heather Stone directly, or they can be dropped off in the equipment room in a box that will be labeled EXCHANGE. If you are dropping off medals please ensure they are all together in a bag, and you clearly identify who they are from. If you do not then we will not be able to get your gift card to you. If the label that was provided is still attached to your medals even better.

We are aware that there are some concerns with the air quality at the pool. We are

working with the WLU staff and trying different solutions to resolve this problem. We will keep you posted once we find an acceptable solution.

Come on out, Volunteer and get involved.

GO ROW!

Alex Berton
President, ROW Swim Club

A Word From Our Head Coach

By Mike Thompson

The Senior 1 group has completed a little under 200 KM from the start of the season to the writing of this entry. The Senior 2 group has done around 140KM if they have completed all practices. Both of these totals are fairly irrelevant, but what is extremely relevant is the quality of work being done. Over 60% of this mileage has been spent trying to correct strokes (injury prevention and efficiency improvement) and more than half of that work has been done practicing new skills at race quality speed. I have to say explicitly how happy I am with both groups right now. Our next focus will be moving from “Satisfactory” skill demonstration to “Great” skill demonstration; and that will all come with more practice.

We started out the season using very personalized goal setting and tracking a lot of areas for improvement. Our main message to swimmers has been taking responsibility for the “trackables”. “Trackables” are activities that we can record, consistently be aware of and check up on. I have made each swimmer a laminated recording form and use grease markers for them to record splits, stroke counts, kicks off the walls, heart rates, number of breaths taken, distance off the walls and other important statistics. “Trackables” are going to make us better.

Furthermore, while I expect to see great improvement this season, we have opportunities to improve our team communication, support, and spirit.

Team Communications:

I will communicate as much as I possibly can- mainly because I am new and you all need to understand how and why I do things. My focus will be on the Seniors (as they are directly impacted by what I do on a daily basis), but I will also provide information on our Website for all levels. Although I expect the Seniors to carry message back to their parents, I will also hold parent meetings to keep you informed. Successful communication must be open and two-way. If I communicate something in a brief or debrief that is

bothersome, let’s talk about it. If something at practice bothered you, open a dialogue. We are a team, so cannot be afraid to communication. I am very approachable and will make time for you.

Team Support:

No one achieves success on their own. That’s why you’re together in a community, in a team, in groups, in lanes, in families, et cetera. Swimming is an individual sport, but it takes a team to develop top notch performances. Tobias Oriwol said it best when once addressing a group I coached: “Team roles in swimming are not as easily laid out as in football, for example, but everyone plays a role in everyone’s success.” (Listen to that speech [here](#)). Everyone on a Football team is responsible for a win and plays a role in the Team’s success (did you know that even the Winning Team’s scoreboard operator and water boys get a Super Bowl Ring?; swimming really should not be addressed differently.

We should draw quite a bit of strength and pride from ROW’s history and do that heritage justice. In a famous story told to me over and over as a former ROW swimmer, one of Victor Davis’s first calls after winning Olympic Gold in 1984 was to his Teammates to thank them for helping him to the top of the podium. No one ascends without everyone else in a Team.

Team Spirit:

We are a great team and I want every other swimmer from every other team to see that. I want our team to cheer and go nuts when we have swimmers in the water. I want everyone to say “ I wish my team was like that”. So do your part- get up and cheer at a meet. Encourage each other in practice. Be the team and the community that everyone else wants to be.

All three of these areas are extremely important, but our most important activity is avoiding distractions that detract from these areas. We always need to be mindful that teammates are allies. A competitive environment is very healthy, but the

competition is for driving the group, club and sport forward, not to leave anyone behind.

Let’s Go ROW!!!

Mike Thompson
Head Coach
ROW/WLU Swimming

Black Team (Senior 1 & 2)

Sarah El Badawy
John Fauteux
Mackenzie Goodwin
Michael Li
Lauren Shearer
Wennie Zhang
Alexander Chai
Jacob Davis
Emma Frey
Teodor Kolev
Cameron McCuaig
Felicia Nguyen
Robert Pavlinch
Jessie Shushack
Ethan Stone
Stephanie Zhang

White Team (Senior 1 & 2)

Alec Elliot
Darby Gielewski
Sydney Kieswetter
Jasmine Raines
Jenny Zhange
Tyler Careless
Craig Dawdy
Jake Einwechter
Christian Iveson-Marr
Ryan McKenzie
Hannah McTaggart
Megan Parrot
Kelly Romborough
Jiaxi Wang
Lukas Wormald
Amy Xie

Gold & Silver Report

By: Brian Lindsay

The Gold and Silver swimmers are doing well in executing various drills and putting in some excellent performances in practice sets in the pool. Their performances will only help in aiding the development of confidence.

One of the most difficult tasks associated with coaching is dealing with an athlete who lacks confidence in their ability to perform at a high level or who does not trust his or her talents.

Athletes who doubt their ability to perform a necessary skill or technique to achieve success are paralyzing themselves. Swimmers are guilty of looking at a practice prepared by their coach and saying to themselves that they cannot achieve that time or looking at a meet program and saying that they can't beat anybody in their heat. Well guess what, when you think that way, you are not going to do it either!

How do you overcome this indecisiveness? There are many ways, but one that is head and shoulders above anything else is developing a positive attitude and concentrating on working hard at practice. Success is forged in practice.

Athletes often think that practice is for training the body to perform the skills physiologically. However,

practice is more than that. A lot of mental training should be going on as well. As the late Sam Sneed, golf pro stated in reference to practicing- "it is a time for the athlete to put their brain into their muscles". Ask former swimmers how many times they have heard their coaches say streamline, fast in, fast out, push off past the flags, and kick through the wall at the finish? There is a reason for coaches saying these things. Consciously practicing those routine things can lead to unconscious habits of success. Then, when facing the pressure of race conditions, these are the routine things that a swimmer will not have to think about. All the swimmer has to do is focus on the task of racing and contending with other swimmers.

Approaching practice with a good attitude and incorporating good listening and practicing skills into your practice routine will lead to many successes.

I look forward to watching the swimmers perform their new found skills with new found confidence in the upcoming meets!

Brian

Black Team (Silver & Gold)

Amanda Gutzke
Mckenzie Bender-Jones
Chloe Hughes
Averyl Bender
Amy Hayward
Sarah Shearer
Aarya Koppikar
Braeden Redlich-Stowe
Aiden Elliot
Kristian Kennedy
Bowen Lin
Kate Hinsperger
Avery Willis
Hannah Cressman
Mannat Sukhja
Kieran Stone
Tyler Bell
Ian Friesen
Kelton Langman
Luka Tomic
Mason Dietrich

White Team (Silver & Gold)

Emily Masters
Jessica Wormald
Jessica Reibel
Mya Hamley
Megan Sawatzky
Erin Dawdy
Nicholas Fauteux
Dissala De Silva
Stephen Lin
Sam Piperakis
Jose Santoyo-Orozco
Matthew Berton
Andres Paz
Prewitte Ranasinghe
Thinsula De Silva
Andrew Kulper
Sophie Richard
Alina Armbruster
Emma Darrigan
Jaelyn Hall

Steel, TOPS & Stars

By: A.J & Matthew Pederson

I'd like to begin by saying I greatly appreciate all the feedback I have received from parents (both positive and constructive) so far this season. As a new coach to ROW it is taking time to become 100% comfortable in my working environment by your feedback is always helpful! On deck practices have been fantastic as the kids have been enthusiastic, open to learning new skills and willing to work hard up and down the pool. Off the deck I have had the opportunity to speak to many parents about numerous items such as competitions, group structure and equipment. It is important to us that parents remain informed with regards to upcoming meets, policies/procedures and general facts or questions they might have. This being said I would like to make aware the following opportunities for communication:

- 1) Both Matt and myself (AJ) can be contacted by email anyone. Once again, our emails are:

Matt: mattyp@live.ca

AJ: a.williamjohnson@gmail.com

- 2) I will be walking around in the stands every Tuesday at WLU during the TOPs and Stars Practice looking to speak with any parents willing to chat, whether it be about missing information or how things are going with their child
- 3) We would like to introduce parents meetings frequently (twice per month) which would provide Matt and myself the opportunity to formal talk about the structure of our groups, our goals within each group, how things are currently going and where we'd like them to be going.

On a final note I am under the impression that several families are having a difficult time signing up for meets, especially new families. If for some reason you are unable to get this sorted out I urge you to contact Dave Friesen our head of communications at communications@rowswimming.ca. Additionally if this isn't sorted out in time for the meet registration deadlines please send me a confirmation email saying you wish to attend the meet (please specify the meet) and I will do my best to make sure your child is entered.

With all the progress seen in the pool I greatly look forward to watching ROW in action over the next few weeks!

- AJ & Matt

Upcoming Dates

Steel:

October 18th- Black and White Meet

October 25th- First Try Meet @ WLU

October 31st- Happy Halloween (no practice)

November 14 to 16- Wilmot Meet

Tops/Stars

October 18th- Black & White Meet

October 31st- Happy Halloween (no Practice)

Black Team (Steel, Tops & Stars)

Alana Watt
Enaal Shouakar-Stash
Kyle Bociort
David Ko
Sydney Routhier
Anuva Pal
Erik Lungulescu
Ksenia Titouira
Marieve Marcos
Leon
Alan S
Alan C
Filip
Hooman
David
Carla
Alexandra
Ana Maria
Ivana
Bronwyn
Rebecca
Ainsley
Zoe Tracy-Bacon
Jake De Koning
Mia Tomic
Eddie Nache
Anzor Shouakar-Stash
Emma Bernard
Keagan Bernard
Max Peng

White Team (Steel, Tops & Stars)

Monika Czajkowski
Alexis Hallohan
Maximus Niu
Jack Cui
Claire Lorentz
Mia Isakovic
Brett Isakovic
Jessica Savescu
Dianna Popa
Leo
George
Laken
Pavel
Adrian
Simha
Helena
Viktoria
Tamara
Isabella
Adelina
Anastassia
Anastassia
Melina
Ava Tracy-Bacon
Jack Donovan
Anastasia Raca
Kai Slidders
Shan Stas
Chelsea Mollitor
Jan Lizon

Bronze & Athletic Swim

by Kaitlyn Mains

IMPORTANT DATES

Oct 17, Entry deadline for Barrie & Wilmot Meet

Oct 18, Black & White meet, Team breakfast to follow

Oct 25, ROW First Try (Everyone)

Oct 31st, No practices for: Gold, Silver, Steel, Bronze, Athletic, Tops and Stars.

Nov 7-9, Swim International (Senior)

Nov 7-9, Barrie Meet (Senior 2, Gold, Silver, Bronze)

Nov 14-16, Wilmot Invitational (steel & bronze)

RAFFLE TICKETS

A Reminder that Raffle Tickets are available for pick up by parents during the upcoming Black & White Meet, or Monday October 20th between 5:30& 6:30pm from Doug or Louise

SAVE THE DATE

Parents, ROW will be having its Annual General Business Meeting (AGM) on Thursday November 27th beginning at 7:00pm in the Hawk Lounge. All members are welcome. Please come out to hear club news and information

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE FOLLOWING SWIMMERS

Myriam Beaupre-Jacques
Dennis Jon
Alexandra Oana
Athán Turner
Disala De Dilva
Mckenzie Bender-Jones
Bowen Lin
Darby Gielewski
Robert Pavlinich
Ryan Mackenzie
Andres Paz
Anzor Shoukakar-Stash
Mia Tomic
Tasha Molerovic
Viktoria Franjic

I'd like to start by saying the season is out to a fantastic start! Both groups have been focusing on technique over distance, and I want to say that both groups are starting to swim beautifully! Not only are they swimming technically well, but they are swimming more efficiently! I'm very excited to see how they swim at their first meet.

I'd like to take this opportunity to go over a few things:

- 1) Bronze has now started dryland on Mondays 6:00-6:30 & Thursdays 5:30-6:00
- 2) I would like to arrange a Bronze parents meeting for Monday October 20th at 8:00pm following practice. At this time we will review what the group has been working on, and what we are working towards, as well as addressing any questions you may have. We will aim to have these group meetings on a monthly basis. The meeting will take place at the benches by the rock climbing wall.
- 3) Both Bronze and Athletic Swim are now using equipment, if you have yet to purchase these items I recommend doing so ASAP. Athletes in both groups need, caps, goggles, water bottles, and flippers
- 4) We are now entering meet season! It is a very exciting time, but there are some expectations that I do have. Ideally I like to see athletes on deck 15 minutes prior to meet warm up. Also, please remember that sessions run for about five hours not including warm up, so please ensure your athlete has a proper packed swim bag. Including: Bathing suit, goggles, back up goggles, ROW swim cap, ROW t-shirt, long comfy pants, deck shoes, water bottle, healthy snacks and a book or cards to entertain themselves on deck. Please keep in mind that

- 5) items for entertainment are not needed for the upcoming Black and

White Meet. Also, although parents are not allowed on deck during the meet, if there is gaps in events athletes are permitted to go visit their parents in the stands.

- 6) Please keep an eye on your email, as this is how I will send out reminders about upcoming events, entry deadlines, and entries.

As usual if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at coachkaitlyn@gmail.com or coachkaitlyn@rowswimming.ca. I try to reply to all emails within 24 hours.

Kaitlyn Mains

BLACK TEAM, BRONZE & ATHLETIC

Simon Armbruster
Lucas Bociort
Madison Friesen
Kingsten Leu
Cameron Maclachlan
Faith McKay
Charlotte Reid
Leonard Santoyo-Orozco
Athán Turner
Katrin Bender
Lynn Dakhqan
Dennis Jo
Katherine Kowalczyke
Katia Myers

WHITE TEAM, BRONZE & ATHLETIC

Samantha Berton
Victoria Chai
Hannah Gallagher
Mackenzie Leu
Broedan Marner
Alexandra Oana
Alex Rus
Shawn Sun
Myriam Beaupre-Jacques
Kate Fitzpatrick
Tanya Jordan
Hugh MacFarlane

Black and White Meet

by Kaitlyn Mains

This coming weekend ROW will host its annual Black and White Meet. I wanted to take a minute to go over the logistics for the meet.

- 1) This meet is purely for fun! It involves team events, and is great for developing friendships and meeting athletes in other groups
- 2) The Black and White meets acts as a replacement practice for athletes that have a Saturday practice
- 3) Warm up for the meet will run from 8:00-8:30, and the deck will be open for swimmers by 7:45am.
- 4) The meet will run from 8:30am-10:00am
- 5) There will be a team breakfast from 10:00am-noon
- 6) We will be collecting non parish food items to donate to the food bank
- 7) The team lists are listed with the athletes group write up, if your athlete is missing please contact your coach, and you will be placed in the appropriate group
- 8) Please try and dress in your team colour! White Shirts for the White team, and black for the black team!
- 9) Attendance for the Black and White meet is not mandatory, but we do hope to see you there as it is always a very fun time.

As always if you have any questions or concerns, please contact your groups coach, and they will address them!

A Note From Meet Management

by Tam Nguyen

Hi all -

This is a reminder that Western Region is hosting a PARA S&T clinic on Saturday, November 15 at Conestoga College in Kitchener.

The clinic will be presented by Jocelyne McLean, an internationally recognized (and certified) PARA swimming official. The clinic will cover the PARA rules in some detail and will be very useful to any of you interested in working with PARA swimmers or, for example, volunteering for the Para-Pan Am events in Toronto next summer.

Please register on line at www.osoa.ca. Registration will be capped at 40, so register soon to ensure your place.

COCs please encourage any interested S&T officials in your club to register.

Also, on November 22 and 23, there is an Ontario University Athletic (OUA) Division Championship at Laurier pool. The universities are Brock, Carleton, Laurentian, Queen's, Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier, and York. The sessions are as below.

Session #	Date	Type	Warm Up	Start	Events
1	11/22/2014	Timed Finals	3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	4:30 pm	1-18
2	11/23/2014	Timed Finals	9:00 am – 10:30 am	10:30 am	19-38

The competition will be fast and furious. We are looking for officials. If you are in town, please consider helping out. Just email Tam Nguyen at 72tnghuyen@gmail.com to sign up.

As a 37 year old club, we have remarkable heritage. Not many clubs in Canada can boast that they have Olympic Gold Medalists or World Champions. Even fewer have had World Record Holders in past rosters.

Victor Davis was the best in the world and a fierce competitor. He was also a ROW swimmer just like you. He was extremely tough and dedicated; but he also understood that above all things, swimming properly (good technique and race strategy) and practicing swimming properly was the key to success.

In this essay he wrote for Swim News back in the 1980s, Victor talks about the importance of technique to a successful race. Special thanks to Matt & Kaitlyn for finding this gem and contributing it to our Newsletter.

Enjoy!

Mike Thompson

On Breaststroke, Victor Davis explains the secrets of his technique

Victor Davis announced his retirement in early July 1989. After a decade of unparalleled triumphs, Canada's greatest breaststroker explained the secrets of his success.

Many great athletes are unable to describe exactly what they do. They perform instinctively.

Victor knew what he was doing.

To be as good as he was and to be able to tell why is an added dimension of his unique greatness.

His only coach, Cliff Barry, played a big part in his success. Victor did his early swimming in Guelph, moving to Waterloo when Barry was appointed head coach at Region of Waterloo Swim Club. Victor eventually followed him to Point Claire, Quebec.

Victor's description of the timing and stroke drills are particularly valuable. Knowing what you're doing at all times made the difference for him.

Victor had a great career and died tragically in November 1989 when hit by an automobile.

This article was first published in the Swim new July 1989 issue. Victor spoke with then Features Editor Patricia Young by phone.

Warm Up

I do a lot of stretching of the legs, groin and shoulders before I even get in the water. Don't ignore this first step of your race. To get prepared for the 200, I warm up for about 1100 to 1500 meters. I do a lot of breaststroke drills, then timing drills: glide to three, glide to two, glide to one. My warm up set is three to four 200 IM's descending.

It is a general warm up, including kicking and pulling 400 easy, 400 kick, 400 pull, 400 drill. Then the 200 IM's and then timing and drills. This is followed by three or four 50s descending, 75%-90%, really working on the timing and stroke efficiency. At the same time, I would be working (from a push) on getting the speed and feel for the first and third 50s of the race. The last 50 would be from a dive. It is paced like the first 50 of a race, not all out.

I loosen down for about 200-300 metres, get our, stretch again, and keep warm.

I make sure my legs are completely loose, warmed up, and flexible. I like to stretch out my gluteus maximus by placing one leg on block and the other foot behind me on the deck. This stretched the gluteus and top half of my hamstring at the same time. I do a lot of calf and forearm stretches. Your forearms need to be extremely loose. I find that it really helps out at the end of the race.

Constantly move and stretch behind the blocks, keeping your muscles arm and fired and ready to go.

Most of the pre-race stretching and moving around is done in the ready room and until the last two minutes before you step on the blocks. The last two minutes are for mental preparation. Concentration on how the race is going to go. I never get distracted by other people. If they want to be distracted by me, that is up to them. I concentrate on my race.

Don't think too much about it. What I mean is, don't get bogged down in the details; what you are doing, where your hands are. At the same time, you have to be aware. You can over think. You can think yourself out of a good race.

The Start

I get up on the blocks when I feel ready, at the same time not delaying the race. If I'm in a rush, I get up first. If I'm not 100% prepared and I need another three minutes, then I'll take a false start. (*This would not be allowed under today's rules.*) To have a great start, you need to get a lot of practice. It doesn't happen in a race if you haven't done the work in practice.

I put my hands outside my legs. Think about staying on the balls of your feet, not letting heels touch the back of the block at all when you're going down into the "take your mark stance." You are ready to spring. It is like a cobra being ready to explode at any second.

If you are sitting on your heels then right away you've lost a few tenths. The Transition from taking the energy from the block all the way through your body is much quicker if it doesn't have to go through the back of your feet.

When the gun goes, the head leads, the hands follow, and the body finishes the action. I like to get out, not high, but straight from the blocks and follow a hole through the water. Get out as far as you can, pikeing or tucking and following your body through a little hole.

You are literally diving towards the bottom of the pool if you don't curl your back. That gives a whipping action when you hit the water. At the same time, keep your shoulders tucked up, as high as you can, into your ears. This streamlines you incredibly, especially when you're gliding underwater before your first pull.

Keep your buttocks tight, feet together, and shoulders tucked up as close to your ears as possible after the first pull. You are still creating a streamline effect .

About two inches before my head breaks the surface of the water, I like to take that first stroke and really get pumping right away, rather than waiting for my head to break the surface and then starting the rhythm. For the first pull, my head is still underwater and it is like a shot gun effect. Foom - I'm up and I'm going.

If, for the first stroke, my head was too shallow or too deep and I didn't hit my rhythm right away, it is important to take the time in the first five stroke in the race and correct it.

I make sure I don't start my pull before my legs come together. I work on snapping my feet together before my hands start pulling. That way I fall into rhythm right away and I'm back on track. At this stage in the race everyone is moving so fast from the start that you really aren't going to lose anything.

The Race

The first 50 has got to be fast and smooth yet controlled speed. When you hit the wall at the first 50, you should feel like you haven't put out any energy whatsoever. I split it in the 30.5 area.

To make sure you get a good turn, the first thing to do is practice your turns in warm up. You have to be able to judge the wall from about three metres out. Know if you have to take a short stroke or if you are going to have to stretch out to hit the wall properly. It is important not to bunch up going into the wall because that tightens up your arms and your shoulders quite a bit.

Regardless of which hand you turn on, whether it is the right or the left, the same rules apply. I turn on my right hand. I go into the wall and I touch with both hands, but the left hand barely touches. Make sure that you drive your knees into your chest as quickly as possible. That will get your legs off the wall faster. A lot of people think that the turns are a resting place. Turns are a point in the race that you can get ahead of everybody else. Turns are important in terms of getting off the wall, streamlining through the water, and coming up to set your stroke with that first pull underwater.

The second 50 has got to be strong and smooth. At this point you should be holding the same comfortable speed that you had in the first 50. I like to work into it and pick up the pace on the last 10 metres of the last 25 of the 100. The 80 metre mark is where I set the pace for the third 50.

I build my race in terms of 60-40. When I'm going into the 100 I build that third 50 to the wall. Always build your race before the turn.

You shouldn't blast it coming off the wall. You can't expect to be going full tilt in five strokes. You have to build it over three to five metres. Most of the build is done in the first 25 metres.

At this point I'm doing okay. My main concern is getting out of that turn. Getting a good turn at this point will set the pace for the last 50. No matter how much you are hurting, think about getting the best turn possible and getting ahead of your competition on that turn. Coming out of the turn, concentrate on your rhythm by setting the stroke rate right away.

Hold your pace off the wall for the first 5-6 stroke and build to full bore by the 20-25 metre mark.

The 200 breaststroke is fatiguing. No matter how tired you are, keep finishing your stroke. Make sure you are finishing your kick before you take your pull. Keep your wits about you and never, ever, ever, look around.

By the final 25 metres, most of my fatigue is in my shins and forearms. No matter how much forearm work you do, and I do a lot of it, your forearms will always fatigue. My stroke is geared towards a lot of forearm and back and shoulder strength, so this area gets really stressed.

The finish

Spinning your wheels is the biggest mistake in the last 50 metres of a 200 metre breaststroke. You are trying to go fast, and still keep your stroke together without failing or breaking up.

Remember to finish your kick before you take that pull. You've got to keep it long and strong. If you rush the stroke, you're in trouble. In freestyle you can flail away and sometimes get away with it, but breaststroke is the most technical stroke there is.

Flailing away and spinning your wheels will get you absolutely nowhere but last place.

For the last 25 metres, you should be concentrating on driving your legs like crazy. Make sure that you lunge and dive at that wall rather than just coasting in for the touch. The finish is as much a part of the race as the first 50 metres. You should be able to judge it and hit it properly. Don't finish with your arms bent. Stretch right out, almost laying on top of the water as you touch the wall.

Drills

Pulling helps my forearms as much as any exercise I do. Make sure when you pull that your elbows are locked, you're getting a lot of water on the outside, you're pulling wide, and your hands are turned out at almost a 90 degree angle. That is where I get most of my forearm work. Pulling sets also strengthen your shoulders. Paddles and pull buoys work very well for that.

For one of my favorite sets I use very small flippers, called boogie flippers. They are smaller than diving flippers, are easy to move around in, and you still get something out of them. My stroke is like a dolphin. This work is geared towards that. A lot of breaststrokers are getting that type of dolphin wave stroke now.

Accentuate your lower back and buttock movements by really breaking the surface of the water with your buttocks, stretching as far as possible with your arms and catching a lot of water. I use flippers, pulling with just paddles and tubing on the land.

I train mostly individual medley, but a third of my training is in breaststroke. It increases when we go into a taper period.

I was good in butterfly and IM, but I found that breast was the hardest stroke to train, not only because you are going slower than everybody, but it seems to be the most fatiguing. It takes so much strength out of you. It was always pushing water, you were never really flowing through the water.

My suggestion is to keep a cool head and keep it all relative. If you race breaststroke you've got to train breaststroke. At the same time, I think it is a coach's responsibility to put the breaststrokers together in one lane and put a lane rope on. It is probably the most frustrating things in the world for a breaststroker to swim into butterfly and freestyle waves when you are fatigued. It is not a lot of fun.

Work on your stroke constantly. When you get into a race, the last thing you want to worry about is if your stroke is there.

You have to know your stroke. My coach, Cliff Barry, has really taught me to understand what I am doing. He teaches you to think for yourself. There are too many robots out there.

Breaststrokers should know where they are at all times; where their feet are, where their hands are, and where their body is in relation to the surface of the water. If you've got a deep start, know that you have a deep start. If you have a shallow start, know that you have a shallow start. Compensate and make the necessary adjustments for these differences.

The most important thing before going into a race is to know that you have done the training and you have trained breaststroke. Keeping your stroke together is the secret of breaststroke. As soon as you start to rush your stroke, you're in trouble.