

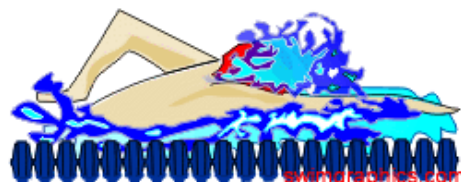
TIP OF THE MONTH...

FREESTYLE SPRINTING 101

By Coach Tony Ackerson

OK, guys and girls, class is in session. We've been blessed over the years at Seminole with an abundance of good sprinters, including a State High School Champion, and numerous Conference, District, and Junior Olympic champions and finalists. Even if you don't fancy yourself as being a particularly gifted sprint freestyler, EVERYONE needs to improve their sprint free, for a couple of reasons:

1. Even distance swimmers can benefit from the additional power.
2. In the high school (and collegiate) dual meet order of events, all of the relays have legs of either 50 or 100 yards. And don't forget that relay points are scored double.



By improving your sprint speed, you make yourself far more valuable to your local high school team, and significantly more marketable to prospective college coaches. Here are some quick tips on maximizing your next 50 free:

Start:

Explode off the blocks, keying everything on reacting and pulling hard with the hands. In practice, take pride in always being the first one away from the blocks.

Streamline:

A million dollar start is worthless if it's coupled with a five cent streamline. Get into the water with one hand on top of the other, and try to make the rest of your torso enter through the "hole" made by your hands and head.

Kick Immediately:

As your feet enter the water, instantly go to a rapid fire dolphin kick. As you near the surface, change to a "machine-gun" flutter kick. Keep it small and fast at first, then bigger and bigger as you get into the race.

Steady Head Position:

Your head should be looking down and slightly forward, goggles just below the surface. Your head SHOULD NOT MOVE during the race, other than to breathe.

Keep Your Lungs Full:

Breathe as little as possible, but when you do breathe, don't exhale while you swim. Think of your lungs as balloons. Keep them full for the added buoyancy.

Nail the Turn (Short Course):

Great mechanics, quick feet snapping over. This is a great place, along with the start reaction, to "steal" time. Come off the wall with a powerful breakout, just like on the start.

No Breath From the Flags In:

Any oxygen you take in during the last three seconds of a race can't be processed to do you any good. Breathing during the last few strokes will cost you valuable hundredths of seconds. So tough it out.

Roll and Extend on the Finish:

Turn to the side, keep your head down in the water, and stab the wall about six inches below the surface, fingertips first. Stay fully extended on the final stroke, and resist the temptation to take an additional, short stroke.

Genetics:

Choose your parents wisely, as genetics play a role as to how much sprint or distance potential you have.

Work Hard, Everyday, All the Time:

Enough said...