

## **Coaching Philosophy**

My coaching philosophy is rooted in the idea that in order to build a successful athlete and hence team, you must first develop the love and enthusiasm for the sport of swimming in each individual swimmer; from the beginner to the competitive and experienced swimmer with the fundamental focus being on solid swim technique. My professional background as an orthopedic and sports physical therapist helps to enhance a program that is infused with injury prevention.

The Stuttgart Piranhas try to foster the cooperative-fun environment of a recreational league, while still offering a strong competitive environment like that found in a Club or High School League. It can be a daily challenge to balance the goals and needs of each group - but the fundamentals of both types of swimming leagues rests on solid technique.

The overall coaching philosophy of the Stuttgart Piranhas is technique-first. We practice technique-driven, quality sets. This doesn't mean that we don't value volume or fast paced practices -- only that the pace (volume) we accomplish is limited by the level that can be accomplished with solid technique -- no garbage yardage.

The Coaching Staff of the Stuttgart Piranhas supports the swimmer and their primary focus is on proper technique. Well respected Club and College teams all agree -- Great Technique is the key to faster swimming.

## **Why Extra Equipment?**

Many parents look at the equipment we use and think it's unnecessary -- that kids should just "swim." But, there's a lot to think about when swimming. Head position, core engagement, body alignment, kicking from the hip, hand entry, early vertical forearm -- and depending upon the stroke a child is learning, many other things. There is no way most developing (or even advanced swimmers) can focus on every detail and learn to swim well this way.

### **Required Equipment\***

#### **Fins**

Fins are an essential tool to help develop your stroke technique. A mid-length silicone or rubber fin gives you good support so that you can focus on performing the drill well without worrying about staying afloat or kicking very hard to move forwards! When used for a specific and focused purpose, fins really aren't cheating!

#### **Paddles – Choose one**

- Finis Agility Paddles - Resistance paddles with a natural handposition.

- Finis ISO Paddles - Increases the 'feel for the water' and allows swimmers to make adjustments to improve stroke technique. Intended for use on drills and stroke-specific training. Versatile tool for all four swim strokes. Outside Isolation: backstroke & freestyle Inside Isolation: breaststroke & butterfly
- Speedo BIOFuse Finger Paddle - Allows the swimmer to focus on and improve hand positioning in the pool, including catch position and arm pull. By allowing the surface area of the palm to stay exposed, it offers a greater feel of the water whilst placing less strain on the shoulders.

### **Pull Buoy**

Used to help you focus on your technique and body position while helping the legs to float. Using this tool also helps to minimize the kick for long sets. By eliminating the kick, you can keep your heart rate lower and really focus on your form.

### **Snorkel**

Used to work on two aspects of your stroke technique - head position and body roll:

1. Head Position: The snorkel helps you find that sweet spot between looking too far forward (with legs potentially dropping) and too far down (with head being too deeply submerged). At either of these extremes you will suck up water through the snorkel - immediately prompting you to correct your head position!
2. Body Roll: The snorkel is used to help control the head itself and focus on keeping the eyes in one spot while the whole body rolls independently - great swimming technique.

### **Tempo Trainer**

'Swimming Beepers' such as the Tempo Trainer Pro are fantastic tools to help you develop your swimming. They operate in two simple ways:

A) In 'Stroke Rate Mode' program in a strokes per minute figure (e.g. 70 SPM), place the Tempo Trainer under your swim cap and you will hear it beep the stroke rhythm to you as you swim. You can easily lower or raise your stroke rate slightly to find the sweet spots in your stroke efficiency. Set your Tempo Trainer Pro to mode 3 to do this.

B) In 'Lap Interval Mode' (modes 1 or 2 on the Tempo Trainer Pro) set the Tempo Trainer to a speed that you wish to swim at per 25m. Like a 'beep test' in the gym, you then simply pace your swim so that you are pushing off on each lap on the beep.

Every piece of equipment the team recommends has a purpose -- whether it's to build or reinforce proper technique, or build power and strength and endurance. These tools for training are not crutches -- they are stepping-stones to technique-driven, faster swimming.

**\*Refer to the Equipment document for the complete list of required swim gear.**