**FREESTYLE BREAKDOWN NOTES with Russell Mark**

**Catch** is the most important priority in freestyle!

Extend arm forward in front of shoulder {“Ro  
 Bend elbow out to side, wider than shoulder  
 “Wrap your arm around the water”  
 Push back with hand and forearm

**Power Triangle** as seen from a front view underwater

**Errors that mess up catch** Over-rotation / Shoulder rotating in front of face (Should keep shoulder to side of face)  
 Placing hand in water in front of face (Should be able to see entry only peeking to the side)

**Body Rotation –** Does not have to be excessive. Think “pivot” instead of “rotate” along long axis of body.

**Long Arm Doggie Paddle is excellent Catch drill** (It’s not called that in the video, but it is the drill with FR with underwater recovery)

**Mistakes which can cause injuries associated with poor technique mechanics** Arm bends behind the back on the recovery  
 Too narrow of a recovery  
  
**Recovery** Sets up the next catch  
 Think about setting the hand up to enter forward (Shoot hand forward)  
 Hand is relaxed  
 Hand is to the side of the body (wider as opposed to narrow)  
 The hand and arm swing in a dynamic throw forward  
 Create a triangle with the arm and the surface of the water (elbow is top of the triangle)  
 Upper arm and elbow lead first half of recovery; hand leads second half of recovery  
 Even in a **straight arm recovery** the hand is still out to the side and shooting forward at the entry (Do not over-rotate and have the arm high above the body on the recovery)

**Finish of Stroke** Keep pressure on hand and forearm  
 After engaging the power triangle, the hand will move some toward body  
 Elbow will exit first (Do no lock out the elbow at the finish)

**Kicking** 1. Bend knee forward (about 90 degrees)  
 2. Knee stays in place while lower leg extands  
 3. Kick deep (past the knee/below body line)  
 4. Kick finishes down before leg begins to rise up  
 5. “Throw water down”  
 6. ERROR: A bicycle kick

**Breathing  
 The key is to make sure your non-breathing arm still has a good catch!**

**Timing** Start to turn head before non-breathing arm enters the water  
 Turn head back into the water as breathing arm begins recovery  
 Try to see the catch on the non-breathing arm (Head back in before the non-breathing arm catches)

Head, not body, leads the rotation into the breath

**Swimming “connected”** Keep a tight core  
 Catch holds water and helps drive the recovery side forward  
 Connect finish of stroke with the entry of the other arm – “Drive entry forward”

**What is the best breathing pattern to use?** The best swimmers use a variety of breathing patterns  
 You should have a pattern for racing strategy  
 In training – breath to both sides to (1) take overstress off of one side and (2) help you understand the proper breathing mechanics.  
 In a race – Most swimmers breath to their “better” side  
 BUT – there is strategy involved  
 Seeing your opponents  
 Maintaining balance of the stroke  
 Oxygen consumption