

## Blue Group Update April 17-

I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe. I've communicated this to you before and I'll communicate it to you again-I hope everyone is taking the social distancing parameters seriously. I know it's hard and uncomfortable but as swimmers, you were built for uncomfortable situations. One of my favorite slogans is "comfortable being uncomfortable". Please follow the guidelines set up by our leaders. It is so disheartening when I go outside and I see kids and young adults hanging out together. As far as looking forward and trying to give you some information about a return to the pool, I don't have any updates for you. In the past week, I've listened and participated in a couple of meetings virtually and there are still a lot of questions out there for everyone. As a coaching staff, Bridget, Leslie, and myself meet a couple of times a week and we are continually trying to come up with ideas on how to make the CYAC experience better now and when we do return to the pool.

Making the CYAC experience better now while we are away from the pool is something we are trying to enhance and improve. Saying that, we have decided to have weekly Zoom meetings for each practice group. Our first Zoom meeting for the Blue group will be this coming Monday at 4:00 pm. We'll meet weekly on Mondays at 4:00 pm until we return to the pool. I'll email the meeting information to your parents. Topics of discussion this week will include our return to the pool, dryland, how can I help you, and any ideas you might have to help make our group/team better. Please come with questions and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday.

This week, I'd like to break down breaststroke. Here we go:

I think breaststroke is one of the most difficult strokes to teach, but once you get the basic concepts, it is a stroke that is sustainable. Some swimmers naturally possess breaststroke traits and some do not. I remember reading an article about Michael Phelps prior to his big break out as an IMer (his first Olympics when he was 15 he only swam the 200 fly). Michael did not have a natural breaststroke but it was something he really focused on in his training. He improved his technique and went onto to become an Olympic champion in the IM. The most basic concept that I feel all good breaststrokers have is patience. Patience? Are you kidding me? Let me explain.

Putting your body in the correct position to optimize power from your kick is the most basic, fundamental concept you can possess. At a swim meet when I was a younger coach, I heard another coach tell one of his swimmers "ride the glide" which really stuck with me as a coach. What does that mean? It means propulsion and power (moving forward) in breaststroke mostly comes from your kick. The best breaststrokers have the best kicks. Does that mean that if you don't have a great kick you can't be a great breaststroker? No-but elite breaststrokers have great kicks. Arm movement, body position, body movement, and length are also really important. But the most basic concept remains clear-your legs should be your focus for power. Your arm movement, head position, body movement, and length **set up your kick** and put you

in a position to glide through the water. Simply stated-your upper body sets up your lower body.

Let's break down further:

**1-Arm movement** (always starting from a position where your hands and arms are directly laid out in front of your shoulders-not quite streamline. Starting position for breaststroke should have your body laid out in a horizontal position).

- Scull out/turning pinkies up/press pinkies down and catch the water a little past the shoulders. Here's where EVF (early vertical forearm) comes into play. The most important part of the pull is the catch. When pressing hands down and inward-KEEP ELBOWS HIGH- until hands are under the chin. Recover hands close to the surface of the water (quick hands from the chin to your start position is important). Your thumbs at the surface of the water is where your hands should be recovering.
- This is where patience with breaststroke comes into play. After completing the pull and putting your arms and head into the correct position (laid out front), you need to wait until your kick is finished (ride the glide). One of the most common mistakes I see with breaststroke is rushing or starting their stroke before the kick is finished.

**2-Body movement, Body position, Head position:**

- Pressing the chest and "popping" your hips toward the surface is your core (abdominal) movement. Press your chest toward the bottom of the pool and "pop" your hips to the surface while your hands recover to the starting position (near streamline-laid out front)
- Good body position is very important and will help with your glide. At a certain point in each stroke cycle, the body needs to be laid out in a horizontal position-head down, feet together, arms laid out front near streamline.
- Head position-think about looking down at the bottom of the pool-not at looking at the other end of the pool. Make a fist and put it under your chin and on your chest (sit your chin on top of your hand). This is where you should hold your head throughout the breaststroke. Another good example is using a tennis ball-hold between your chest and chin for good head position.

**3-Breaststroke kick:**

- Pull your heels up towards your bottom and turn your feet out.
- Heels push back and outward with a whipping motion. Squeeze your feet together for power and propulsion.
- Once kick is finished hold for your glide (ride the glide).

Here are two links that breakdown the breaststroke a little more and emphasize my keys to a good breaststroke. Everyone is capable of improving their breaststroke if they are willing to be patient and put their bodies in the right spot.

[https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;\\_ylt=AwrCmnSJ1ZlePjcA9gsPxQt.;\\_ylu=X3oDMTByN2Ruc2MwBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwM0BHZ0aWQDBHNIYwNzYw--?p=breaststroke&fr=yhs-pty-pty\\_maps&hspart=pty&hsimp=yhs-pty\\_maps](https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrCmnSJ1ZlePjcA9gsPxQt.;_ylu=X3oDMTByN2Ruc2MwBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwM0BHZ0aWQDBHNIYwNzYw--?p=breaststroke&fr=yhs-pty-pty_maps&hspart=pty&hsimp=yhs-pty_maps)

<https://www.enjoy-swimming.com/breast-stroke.html>

Have a good weekend,

Coach Mike