December Stroke Tips

**December Stroke Tips**

**Stroke Tip: Swimming With Purpose**

Whenever we incorporate Stroke Drills into our practice, we do so for a couple of reasons. First, we like to break the strokes down into smaller components to "hyper focus" on certain aspects or mechanics. Secondly, Stroke Drills are a great way to warm down and bring stroke integrity back to an otherwise tired and disintegrating movement through the water. But just as it is important to navigate the drill correctly, it is equally imperative to integrate the proper technique back into your swimming. Too many times, as coaches we can see the

progression during the drill portion itself, but it then becomes discarded a few laps later.

Let's take the **"Thumb to Shoulder Drill"** for Freestyle. The purpose in this drill is two-fold. 1) We want to alter the timing of the catch with the recovery arm so we do not "catch and release" at the same time. By leaving the lead arm extended (with the hand  slightly submerged so the hand is deeper than the elbow, and elbow deeper than the shoulder) until the recovery hand touches the shoulder, we know we are extending the length of our boat in a balance body posture. We use the tactile touch of the finger to the shoulder to create awareness and positive feedback that the hands are where they should be.Now when the hands move simultaneously from this point, the hands will pass each other in front of the head and we (2) will maintain a longer body line with less resisitance.

But this is only a beneficial practice if it filters into our regular freestyle. Practice the stroke you want to get graded on, whatever that grading scale may be :)