**February Stroke Tips**

**Stroke Tip: Flipping Someone Off**

A 10:30 Creeker and I were talking flip turns today during practice. What we were discussing was the planting of the feet on the wall. Many will 1/4 turn as the legs head for the wall so the feet are planted facing to either side. Thankfully, very few plant with toes facing the bottom. Most highly trained competitive swimmers will plan with toes facing skyward. There are a couple of  advantages to this approach. When landing on the wall "feet sideways" it doesn't always coincide with the proper arm taking the last stroke, because it usually involves initially rolling over the shoulder at the start of the turn. So speed is lost gliding, or turns are bunched-up trying to squeeze in one more before the flip. Also, if you have a tendency to roll over your left shoulder, it is sometimes hard to navigate back to the right side of the lane to circle swim in a practice lane.

With "toes up" turns, the head and shoulders come straight over the hips, so it doesn't matter which arm is the last to stroke. For most of us, torque-ing or twisting the hips happens during the explosive push-off to help direct us onto our stomach as we beginning the break-out strokes.

**Stroke Tip: It Takes Two**

In many swimming instances, there are "two touches" we want to focus on having. **1)** We talk about this one frequently because its a small thing that makes a "big deal" difference. To maximize streamlining off the wall or after a dive of backstroke entry, the first touch we want to feel is the thumb of the top hand wrapped around the palm of the bottom hand. The other is feeling the biceps squeeze against the side of the head. **2)** In Breaststroke and Butterfly turns and finishes, the hands must touch the wall simultaneously. and **3)** During Breast and Fly turns, we should have both hands leave the wall  (at different times) before both feet touch the wall. This means the trail hand needs to release from the wall before the feet sweep to the wall and touch. If the hand is still on the wall when the feet get there, time is lost. Remember, the key to success is always in the detail - albeit ever so small.