Jumping Into Open Water

With Olympian Haley Anderson & National Team Member David Heron
David Heron

- 1x Pan American Games medalist (1 Silver)
- Represented Team USA at the 2015, 2017 & 2019 Open Water World Championships
- 3x US Open Water National Champion
- 7x US National Team member
Haley Anderson

- 3x Olympian (2012, 2016, 2020 Qualifier)
- 1x Olympic medalist (1 Silver)
- 5x Open Water World Championship medalist (2g, 2s, 1b)
- 2x Pan Pacs medalist (1g, 1s)
- Tied for most open water world championship medals by a female swimmer in American history
Introduction

- What is Open Water?
- Basic Rules
- Competitions
- Race Preparations
- Race Day
- Race Advice
- Personal Experiences
- Open Water Training
- Open Water Training Drills
What is Open Water

- First introduced as an Olympic event in 2008
- Race against competitors and not the clock
- Race strategies are ever-evolving, as are the conditions. Adaptability is key!
- Race distances vary in length, with the exception of Championships:
  - Zone Championships - 5K
  - International/National Championships
    - 5K & 7.5K Junior Events
    - 5K, 10K & 25K Senior Events
Open Water Training in the Pool

- How does your pool training differ from your non-OW teammates?
- How much “extra” training is needed compared to a 1500 LCM?
- Do you ever work on OW skills in the pool?
Open Water in Open Water

- Swimming in a line
- Switching leaders in a line
- Reaction drill
- Finishes
Basic Rules

- Start of the race
- Whistle vs. yellow flag vs. red flag
- Buoy turns
- Feeding station
- Finish
Competitions

- Local Races
  - Local race calendar coming soon to the USA Swimming website!
- USA Sanctioned
  - Zone Championships
  - US Junior Nationals - April/May
  - US Nationals - April/May
- International Races
  - FINA World Cups
  - World Championships
  - World University Games
  - Pan Pacific Championships
  - Pan American Games
Race Preparations

● What to Bring
  ○ Goggles
  ○ Caps
  ○ Racing suit
  ○ Vaseline/Lanolin
  ○ Gloves & Baby Wipes
  ○ Duct Tape

○ Race Feeds
○ Pre race nutrition
○ Feed Stick
○ Sunscreen
○ Towel
○ Post Race nutrition
Race Preparations

- Feeds
  - Basic formula:
    - 16 oz of electrolytes like Gatorade or Powerade
    - 1 GU/Powergel
    - Prepare 4-5 feeds before going to the venue
Race Preparations

- Feed Strategy
  - Regular feeding
  - Consume 20-40 oz of feeds during a 10K race
  - Feed early - not the final 30 minutes
  - Practice feed strategy in a pool practice
Race Preparations

● Feed Stick
  ○ Rules
    ■ Under 15 ft long
    ■ Must use the feed stick to deliver the feed or new goggles/cap
  ○ How to make
    ■ Painters pole or anything similar to one
    ■ Cup holder
      • Tube mount
      • Duct tape it to the end of the pole
    ■ Make it easily visible
Race Day Timeline Example - 9 AM Start

6:30 AM        Breakfast
7:00 AM        Depart for venue
7:30 AM        Arrive at venue. Check conditions - how will this change the race strategy?
7:45 - 8:00 AM Check in. Bring racing suit, cap, goggles, credential/ID
8:00 - 8:30 AM Warm Up. Dynamic stretching or a quick swim to practice a few finish approaches.
8:30 AM        Suit on. Lanolin/vaseline applied. Timing chips secured.
8:50 AM        Final call room/pre-race briefing
8:58 AM        Walk out to the water
9:00 AM        Start
Race Advice

- **Sighting**
  - Try to practice swimming the course before the start of the race
  - Use a larger object in the distance to sight off
  - Do not lift your head too often
Race Advice

- Finishes
  - Practice hitting the finish structure before the race
  - Be aware of
    - Structure height
    - Waves
    - The angle of the finish chute
  - Many times it will come down to whoever has the best finish
Race Advice

- Wear your goggles over your cap
- Only lead with a purpose
- Swim directly behind someone's feet
- Always be aware of your surroundings
- Duct tape your timing chips
- Stay Calm!
Personal Experiences - David Heron

- **US Nationals**
  - 10k
    - Usually a fast first 1k, calmer 6k, fast 3k
    - Most of the time people will swim in a line of 1-3 swimmers across
    - I will feed 2-3 times
  - 5k
    - Usually a fast pace the entire race
    - Swimmers are grouped up more

- **International Competitions**
  - Overall faster pace
  - A lot more physical during the race
  - Dive start
Personal Experiences - Haley Anderson

● **US Nationals**
  ○ Smaller races so I try to stay towards the front
  ○ Be aware of who is leading and if they are going straight
  ○ Feed once depending on temperature

● **International Competitions**
  ○ Don’t overwork the first half and spend the second half positioning well for the last lap
  ○ Harder to maintain position
  ○ Feeding is more difficult with more swimmers

● **Olympic Games**
  ○ Smaller field but still pretty fast paced
  ○ Pack stays together most of the race
Q & A with David & Haley