Breaststroke

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The Best...

• Have the most speed when they extend into their line

• Have the most speed at the peak of their stroke/breath
  – Just before extending into line
  – Slow down the least at that point
Priorities

• Shoot into your line
  – Like **REALLY** shoot into your line!!
  – Chest, body, and arms
  – Dynamic action

• Set up in order to shoot into your line
  – Want to maintain as much speed as possible before shooting into line
  – Hand path is smooth and round
  – Elbows stay wide
Breaststroke Line

- Fingertips to toes
- Hide head in between arms
- Hips high just under the surface
Press into Line

• Shoot the hands
• Surge the upper body
  – Don’t just throw the head
• The body is just as important as the hands
  – Impacts timing of the kick
Breaststroke Pull

• Two purposes:
  1. Generate propulsion
  2. Set up to shoot into line

• Have to find balance between the two
  – Pulling too much can compromise body/hip position and decrease speed
  – Pulling too little so you’re definitely not getting stuck doesn’t help propulsion
The Pull

• The shape of the pull dictates how well you maintain forward speed
  – Unlocks the body surge
• Hands make a round shape
  – No sharp corners
  – No direct backward force applied on the water
The Pull

1. Distinct outsweep
   - Palms face the side of the pool
   - Generally just outside shoulder width
   - Not propulsive, but sets up the shape

2. Inward “catch”
   - Hands carve down and inward
   - Elbows stay high; near surface; above hands
   - This is where breath occurs
The Pull

1. Distinct outsweep

2. Inward “catch”
The Pull

3. Transition to shoot arms forward
   - Elbows come next to body
   - Hands elevate; naturally facing upward
   - Elbows DO NOT squeeze together in front; stay wide

4. Recovery
   - Hands shoot forward; push forward with elbows
   - Elbows stay wide, just naturally follow the hands
   - Rotate palms down; opens biceps for extension
The Pull

3. Transition to shoot arms forward

4. Recovery
The Pull: Common Flaws

• Breathing too early
  – Breathe on inward catch; the hands carving down will help the head/body lift

• Skipping the outsweep / pulling back immediately
  – Early breath
  – Compromised body/hip position

• Getting “stuck”...
  – Elbows go too far back; body gets upright
  – Elbows get too narrow; gets in way of body
  – Sharp corners; round shape transfers speed forward
The Pull: Important Notes

• Trying to maximize pull propulsion can compromise overall speed
• Remember, it’s about:
  – Maintaining speed at the peak of the breath
  – Having maximum speed at the extension
• It’s not about who is the best puller
• Breaststroke is won in the spaces between the strokes
The Pull: Important Notes

• The best pull keeps the body leaning and moving forward over the water
• Head should stay neutral; can look forward
  – Any head movement should controlled and smooth
Timing

• When do the knees bend to bring heels up?
  – At end of inward catch as arms transition forward

• FAST heels!
  – Especially since it’s so late and non-propulsive

• When do feet turn outward and push water back?
  – As arms reach full extension
  – Head is just about to get in line
Timing

• Pull with your legs in streamline
• Kick with your upperbody in streamline
• Maximize both propulsive movements
  – Never getting in the way of each other
• “Late” timing
  – Heels not coming up fast enough
  – Arms extended, but upper body not in line
The Kick

• Heels come up, knees go down
  – A sharp thigh angle (or deep knee) is inevitable
  – Creates resistance, minimize amount of time here

• Most breaststrokers have knees at shoulder width
  – Could decrease the angle of the thighs facing water
  – Could make it easier to turn feet out
The Kick

• Push water back
  – Feet turn out; toes point to the side
  – Feet should set up at least width of knees, not inside

• The kick will naturally extend downward.

The keys are to:
  – Push back as much as possible
  – Get the legs up and in line as quickly as possible
Increasing Speed

• Pulling faster or harder does not create speed or increase tempo

• Increase speed/tempo by:
  – Less glide
  – Bring heels up faster; push back sooner
Common Issues

• Diving down
  – Use the body more
  – Kick back more
  – The body might be coming up too high
  – The hands might be too high out of the water

• Dolphin kick
  – Related to diving down with the hands
  – And then having to arch upward back toward the surface
Breaststroke: Pullout

• Body line is the absolute priority
• Put kick where the line stays best
  – For most people, it’s after hand separation and before pull down
• A big dolphin kick isn’t necessarily best
  – Kick from the knees