TEACHING AND TRAINING BUTTERFLY
The History of Butterfly

- Butterfly is relatively modern stroke compared to freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke
- Butterfly was introduced as a variation of breaststroke in the 1930’s
- Originally butterfly arms with breaststroke kick
Butterfly Belief Systems

- Teach before you train – do not reinforce poor mechanics
- Butterfly is a rhythm stroke not a power stroke
- The longer the distance the more the stroke depends on posture, line, balance and rhythm
- GOAL: Slow down less than your opponents
Teaching Butterfly Technique

- **Body Position**
  - Lead with the top of the head
  - Eyes down
  - Head, shoulders and spine in neutral position
  - Everything moves forward not up and down
Teaching Butterfly Technique

- **Pull Pattern**
  - Hands enter the water in front of the shoulders
  - Reach forward (Scapular extension)
  - Set anchor
    - Lift elbows
    - Point fingers at bottom
    - Slide body past where hands anchor
  - Pull pattern traces outline of the body
Teaching Butterfly Technique

Recovery

- As pull ends at hip bone, “karate chop” to round exit
- Quick throw to front
- Recover along body line
  - Recovery above body line causes stroke to be “heavy” and increases risk of injury
- Thumbs forward as soon as possible - no later than shoulders
Teaching Butterfly Technique

- Breathing
  - Hide breath within body undulation
  - Neutral spine and head during breath
  - Exhale during pull/ don’t hold breath
Teaching Butterfly Technique

- **Undulation**
  - Kicking is “body undulation with energy flowing out the legs” (Richard Quick)
  - Land hands and breath forward not down
  - Hips lift as hands reach forward
  - Focus is on “upkick” as hands reach forward to enhance balanced horizontal body position
  - **KICK:** don’t force it – it is part of the body undulation
    - Overemphasizing down kick can pull body out of posture, line and balance
Teaching the Basics

- Lane line games
  - Teaches to dive forward
  - Teaches to “throw thumbs”
  - Progresses to
    - Jump +1
    - Jump +2
    - Push +1
    - Push +2
A Simple Drill Progression

- Pulse with a snorkel
  - Sets posture line and balance
  - Teaches athlete to swim from inside out
A Simple Drill Progression

- Pulse with a snorkel and 2 buoys
  - Sets posture line and balance
  - Teaches athlete to swim from inside out
  - Teaches athlete to “pulsing” without hands/to pulse without sculling to generate undulation
A Simple Drill Progression

- Stoneskipper with a snorkel
  - Correctly connect anchor (and ultimately pull) to posture, line and balance
  - Learn to generate “power” through connection
A Simple Drill Progression

- Stoneskipper without snorkel
  - Teaches correct breath initiation and completion
  - Helps with late breath
A Simple Drill Progression

- Rachel Drill (with or without a snorkel)
  - Allows for neural mapping of recovery
    - Recover in line with body
    - Thumbs forward as soon as possible
A Few Other Drills

- Sky fly
  - Many teaching benefits
    - Breath timing
    - Low breath
    - Extension as setting the anchor
    - Body position
    - Forward momentum
A Few Other Drills

- **Vertical Butterfly**
  - Teaches catch/anchor; pull body past hands

- **Tennis ball under chin**
  - Helps to correct a high breath

- **Tennis ball in hands**
  - Helps teach athletes to lift elbows and use forearm to anchor
Basic Corrections

- Hands too wide at entry – Clap

- Hands too high on recovery – Angel
  - Can also do on deck
  - Neural mapping
Training Butterfly

- I rarely do a “main set” with a butterfly focus
- GOAL: 900 meters of butterfly in every practice
- Friday morning Senior practice is breaststroke and butterfly groups
  - Jason Turcotte does breaststroke group
  - I do butterfly group
Training Butterfly

- Breathing
  - Generally I believe in breathing every other stroke
  - However, if the athlete has a strong underwater presence (12-15 meters underwater consistently) then I believe swimmers must breath every stroke to prepare to go back underwater
  - But, breathing every stroke should never compromise rhythm and mechanics
Examples of Training Sets

16 x 100
1 – free
2 – 75 free/ 25 fly Rest :05 at 75
3 – 50 free/ 50 fly Rest :05 at 50
4 – 25 free/ 75 fly Rest :05 at 25
5 - fly
Rd #1 @ 1:20
Rd #2 @ 1:30 with :10 rest
Rd #3 @ 1:35 with :15 rest
Rd #4 @ 1:40 with :20 rest
  • Fly is fast/ free is active recovery
  • Can do set with fly at beginning or end
Thank You

- Beth Winkowski
- 404-784-5570
- bethwinkowskigrant@hotmail.com