



Volume XLIV, Issue X STREAMLINE NEWSLETTER

November 2024

As we near the end of the fall season, we as a staff eagerly anticipate the upcoming championship meets! Throughout the month, our swimmers have been hard at work training and attending swim meets. Drylands have increased in intensity and swim practices have gotten harder; all while the athletes pushed themselves to swim their best at the two swim meets we attended. The high schoolers attended even more events!

We couldn't be prouder of our swimmers results in November. Their improvments have all the coaches excited for a very successful series of championship meets.

As we begin to have more frequent cold fronts, we encourage parents to make sure their athletes are dressed comfortably when attending practice. At Oakbrook West, please have your athletes wear close toe shoes to be comfortable as possible during drylands. If your athletes ever expresses interest in attending on of our indoor locations during the cold fronts, we suggest you to take them to either Clear Brook HS or La Porte HS. Making sure the athletes are comfortable for their training is one of our greatest concerns for the next few months.

Beyond the Pool: The Unique Benefits of Swimming Over Other Team Sports



I was only 8 years old, but I still remember sitting on my dad's lap at the family doctor's office. After checking me over, the doctor told my parents I had a light scoliosis, my right shoulder was slightly lower than my left, probably because I was always carrying my backpack on one shoulder. In my mind, I thought, "Easy fix; I'll just switch shoulders." But instead, the doctor suggested I start swimming to strengthen my back. "Swimming? How could that help my back?" I wondered. And so, I began swimming, not for fun, not because my family expected it, but because I needed it. Years later, I see how right the doctor was. Choosing a sport is a big decision, and while sports like soccer, football, basketball, and baseball offer great team dynamics, swimming brings unique advantages as an individual sport. It strengthens the body, builds mental toughness, and develops character, giving swimmers skills that last far beyond the pool. Here's why I think swimming might just be the best choice.

Total Body Conditioning: Swimming offers an incredible full-body workout, engaging almost every muscle while sparing joints from the high-impact stress of sports like football or soccer. The resistance of the water builds muscle strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. This creates balanced physical development, which for young athletes means less risk of injury and a level of fitness hard to achieve in land-based sports.

Building Discipline and Independence: In swimming, there's no team to rely on during a race, it's just you, the lane and the water. This teaches personal accountability as athletes learn to

take ownership of their times, goals, and progress. It fosters a strong sense of discipline and self-reliance, as swimmers quickly realize that their results are tied to the dedication they put into training. This independence builds confidence and empowers young athletes in a way few sports can.

Developing Focus and Mental Resilience: Swimming requires intense concentration, whether it's form, pacing, or breathing, all while pushing through the demands of the water. This focus builds mental toughness and essential stress management skills that benefit athletes in and out of the pool. Additionally, swimming's rhythmic, meditative nature reduces stress and helps athletes find balance. Maybe it sounds unconventional, especially from a coach who hasn't consistently practiced other sports but has tried one every time he had an opportunity. While every sport has its benefits, builds strength, and promotes health, I believe that swimming does it all just a bit better.

-Coach Francesco

Swim Talk with Coach Collin

Hey AQUASTAR!

This month has been jammed packed with lots of hard practices, meets and great swims! Athletes were putting in hard work as the intensity in practice peaked this month and many are seeing the results. Some of these swimmers were the high school athletes who competed in multiple high level meets this month. Congratulations to Alicia Mellin, Emma Brueggeman, and Andrew Loe who all had major time drops and qualified for the SSDL National Championship! Emma's great performances also qualified her for the gulf age group champs! Keep up the hard work everyone and hopefully we can see a few more athletes get the SSDL National Champ qualifying times at our champ meets coming up.

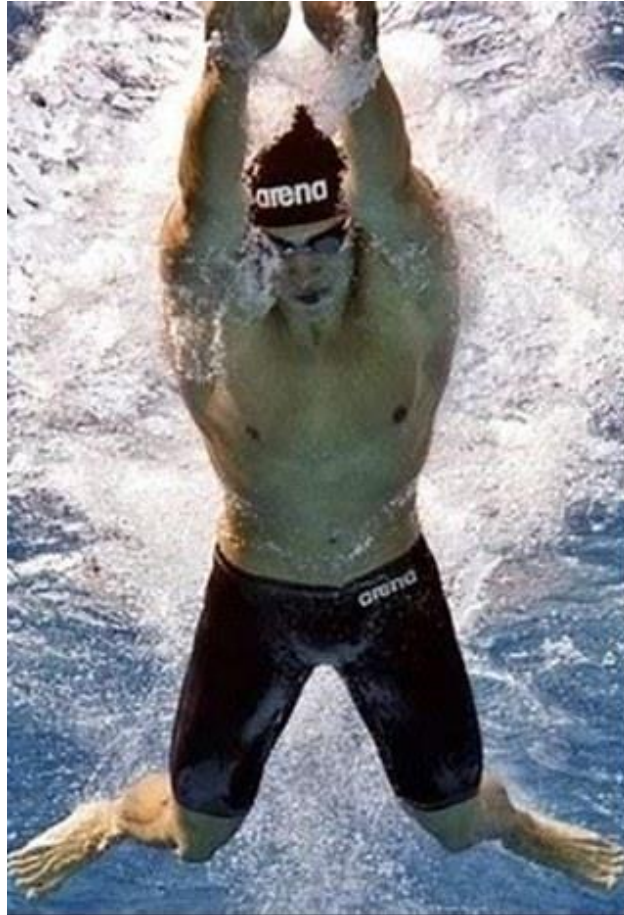
Last month, I broke down the Backstroke technique of one of the greatest backstrokers of all time Regan Smith. We discussed the different aspects of her stroke such as her body position, pointing of her toes and how that affected the power of her kick, and lastly the different parts of her pull. Please refer to the previous newsletter if you'd like to read more about it.

This month I would like to talk about a fan favorite stroke Breaststroke! Many athletes love this stroke for many different reasons. Some swimmers are naturally stiff in their ankles which causes them to favor the Breaststroke kick which in turn makes them favor the stroke; and then there are some swimmers unfortunately who love it because just because they can breathe every stroke. Whatever the reason may be, Breaststroke is a fan favorite.

Today I will be talking about the 5 most common mistakes in Breaststroke!

1. The first mistake and arguably the most common, is too wide of a kick!

- When swimming Breaststroke, swimmers should aim for a narrower kick like the picture below. The **left picture is the correct size**, and the **right picture is too wide!**



- The goal is to keep the **knees inside our body line** which means keeping them within our shoulders.
- Our shoulders are the **widest part of our bodies**, so we want to stay within our shoulders to reduce drag we create in the water. This will also allow us to keep our muscles more compact throughout the kick.
- Now you may be thinking what about our feet? Our feet **will extend** past our shoulders but that's perfectly fine due to the propulsion created from the kick vs the drag created.
 - With breaststroke kick, **nearly all the propulsion occurs from the instep of the feet pushing backward**. The peak force occurs when the feet are about halfway back toward complete extension of the legs. The **closer the swimmers' knees are to the shoulder line, the more power that will be generated versus the drag that's created**. With a wide breaststroke kick, the feet may be pushing backward in relatively still water, rather than against the stream of water that's created from your body cruising through the water. That can significantly affect propulsion. **A small amount of propulsion is also possible from the up kick** that occurs at the end of the breaststroke kick.
- **Many athletes create a wide kick due to leading their kick with their knees!**
 - When athletes bring their feet **straight up to their butt**, they tend to spread their knee **right away** which creates the wide kick.
 - A trick to stop this is bring your heels directly to the sides of your hip as shown below. This keeps the knees in place and allows you to get the benefits described above.



- **Drills to work on this skill.**
 - **Streamline kick on back** – This is a great drill to focus on everything above and how it also affects your body position.

- **Breaststroke kick with a pull buoy** – This drill helps athletes work on keeping their knees closer together to get a feel of a narrower kick.

2. The next major mistake is Timing!

- When we swim breaststroke, the order is pull, Kick, glide. The issue with most swimmers isn't the order they do the stroke but its where they add in the 'pause' in the stroke.

- Many swimmers add the pause in the breath portion of the stroke.

- At this point of the stroke, **we are at our most compact and 'sinkable' position**. This position is where we **face the most drag** which causes us to **lose the most velocity (speed)** in our stroke. This is pictured in the left image below.

- We should aim to have the **pause at the end of our stroke**. This is our **longest position** in the stroke and **faces the least amount of drag**. This is pictured in the right image below.



- **Drills to work on this skill.**

- **2 Kicks 1 pull** – Swimmers are forced to pause at the long position to make sure they complete both kicks without sinking.

- **Breast Pull with Free Kick** – Athletes will use freestyle kick for 3 seconds between pulls. This will cause them to have to pause at the long position and then breath at the beginning of the stroke.

3. Too Large of Stroke Amplitude

- Breaststroke has an undulation to it (a wave motion). Many swimmers will overdo this motion which will result in coming too high out of the water and create an increase in drag.
- When **you lift your head, your hips will sink**. It's what I like to call the natural see saw. The higher you lift your head, the lower your hips will drop, which will make you have to push against a lot more water and make it hard to lunge forward.
- The ideal body line/head position is shown below.
- On the left you have Olympic champion in the 100 Breast Lydia Jacoby. She tends to stay low and long along the surface which reduces her drag significantly.
- On the right you have Olympic record holder Ryan Lochte who has a similar body line with a slightly higher undulation. As you can see his head is still perfectly in line with his body.



- **Drills to work on this skill.**

- **Breast pull with fly kick** – This drill allows you to add the fly motion to breaststroke and work on the size of your undulation.
- **Body position breast kick** – This drill you will have your arms at your side and practice incorporating the short axis motion (up and down motion) to be able to breathe.
- **Breast Pull with Free Kick** - focus on staying near the surface while you breathe similar to Lydia.

4. Dropping the elbows in the pull.

- One of the biggest weaknesses I have seen is the lack of power from the pull. Many swimmers will drop their elbows early in the pull which causes them to 'slip' in the water. This means that they don't get a solid initial catch of the water and causes a significant decrease in power of the pull.
- When doing the pull portion of breaststroke, we want the athletes to **get their fingertips below their elbows** as quickly as possible. This means **they will have a high elbow catch like that of freestyle**. Just like in freestyle, **the greater the catch, the stronger the pull will be**.
- **In the left image**, the swimmer has the initial drop in their elbows. This drop will cause the swimmer's arms to slide through the water quickly without catching enough water. **This is only good for making circles not swimming fast!**
- The **middle and right images** show the **proper way to catch the water in your pull**. As you can see, **their elbows are above their hands** which allows these athletes to be able to push the water behind them generating propulsion.





- **Drills to focus on this skill.**

- **Front scull and Windshield Wiper skull** – This drill requires athletes to wave their hands side to side out in front of the body. This works on the initial catch as seen in the left image below. The windshield wiper drill as shown in the right image, requires swimmers to wave their hands side to side in the high elbow position in the pull. This allows athletes to get used to this position as well as feel the strength of the high elbow catch.





5. Swimming too slow

- The last mistake that many athletes make is that they try to use breaststroke as a leisure stroke. **Swimming too slow** in breaststroke will cause many of the issues listed above **due to lack of timing, propulsion or incorrect body position in the water**. Swimming at a slow rate for a long time will cause these form issues **to not only occur but become habit!** This will prevent the swimmer from achieving the power they desire from the stroke.
- **Breaststroke is a power stroke!** Treat it as such! Breaststroke requires fewer strokes to get across the pool compared to the other 3 strokes. Therefore, each stroke matters more in terms of power. If you don't add the power to the power stroke, then the stroke will fall apart!
- **You can work on this issue by focusing on distance per stroke.**

I hope everyone enjoyed the breakdown above. Hopefully we will start to see some fantastic breaststroke going forward! If you have any questions about what was mentioned above, please reach out to me or your coaches.

Go AQUASTAR!

-Coach Collin

Gary. "Physics for Swimmers, Coaches and Parents - Propulsion." *The Race Club*, 7 Dec. 2020, theraceclub.com/aqua_note/physics-for-swimmers-coaches-and-parents-propulsion/#:~:text=The%20second%20occurs%20as%20both,complete%20extension%20of%20the%20legs.

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Swim Meets



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SHAC Swim Meets

Early in the month, AQUASTAR participated in the SHAC Senior and 14U meets. The weekends were full of great swims, thunder parties, and A LOT of lightning. Overall, the team swam great with over **60%** of our athletes' dropping times in **at least one** of their many events! Out of the **94 total swims** by an AQUASTAR athlete, **45 were best times!** **20** of those remaining swims were **completely new times**. We always love to see athletes venture out of their comfort zones! We hope to see more and more athletes try new events. You never truly know what events you're good at until you try them all.

Below are the athletes who achieved new USA motivational times!

- **Crichton Vandertie** achieved an AA time in 1650 and a gulf champs time in the 1000. This occurred all in the same race! Great swim Crichton, keep up the good work.
- **Olivia Nagel** achieved her first B time in the 50 Back! Congratulations Olivia hope to see more of these times next meet!
- **Rhett Philips** continues his quest to achieve all BB times as he achieved his BB in both the 200 and 500 freestyles!
- **Nicolas Rangel** achieved a B time in his 100 back!
- **Patrick Redmond** achieved his first B time in a 100 yard event achieving the time in the 100 IM!
- **Ingrid Schauss** had a big drop in her 100 free to reach BB status!
- **Ann Marie Schladenhauffen** showed she really loves Breaststroke as she crushed her 50 breast race and achieved a BB time!
- **Ryker Swor** had a fantastic showing in the mid distance events as he got his second A time as a 13-14 year old in the 200 free as well as a BB time in the 500.

Congratulations to all the above swimmers on a great meet!

On top of all the great swims already mentioned we have our swimmer of the meet. This swimmer had major drops in almost every single event as well as achieving new motivational times! He has put in a lot of hard work recently which allowed him to be promoted to the Blue group. Our swimmer of the meet is **Rhett Phillips!** Congratulations Rhett.

BATS Swim Meet

Less than a week ago, AQUASTAR participated in the BATS invitational! This meet marked the last fall meet before the main event of the season, the Fall Championship Meets. Overall, last weekend was a success as many swimmers had successful swims in many different ways. Either

the the swimmers dropped significant time or demonstrated mastery of different skills learned in practice. Below are the swimmers who earned new USA motivational times and our swimmer of the meet!

- Claire Chornuk struck twice as she achieved BB times in both the 50 Breast and 50 Fly!
- Dalan Halili earned his first BB time in 50 Back with a nice .5 second drop.
- Gregory Haronitis achieved his first BB times in both the 50 Fr and 50 Fly. This was also his first meet on Aquastar!
- Zoe Haronitis couldn't let her brother have all the glory as she also had a great race and achieved an A time in the 100 back.
- Brenden Martinez lowered his PB in his favorite event the 100 breast and achieved a BB time!
- Khesley Manigold had some big drops this meet but none of them were as big as the 100 IM. Khesley earned herself a B time!
- Sara McGrady had some huge drops in the 200 Free and Breast and earned B times in both events!
- Alicia Mellin annihilated the 50 free and earned an AA time! This also qualified her for another SSDL National championship event.
- Rhett Phillips keeps showing us the hard work he is putting in by having another fantastic meet. Rhett achieved two motivational times, a B time in the 100 Breast and a BB time in the 100 free!
- Carla Rangel swam a full meet schedule but that didn't tire her out as she had a staggering 6 second drop in her 200 free which earned her a B time.
- The Redmond family all had some fantastic swims! Lily in her first meet this season earned herself a B time in the 50 free. Mairi broke 3 minutes for the first time in her 200 IM and earned herself a B time. Patrick swam like a stud and dropped 6 seconds in the 50 fly earning himself a B time. Molly also swam well but there are no motivational times for 8 & unders but I'm sure we will see some from her in a couple years!
- Ethans Schauss flexed on his opponents with a tremendous drop in his 100 free. He broke the 1 minute barrier for the first time and earned a B time!
- Ryker Swor had some seriously great swims as hes approaching closer to his SSDL National Cuts. One of these was a B time in the 100 fly!

- Lastly, we have Jase White dropping nearly 15 seconds in his 200 Breast and achieving a BB time! Jase broke the 3 minute barrier for the first time congrats!

Now for the swimmer of the meet. Our swimmer of the meet for the Bats Invitational is one of our hardest working swimmers on the team. Not only does he push himself in the pool and on the deck for drylands, he takes it upon himself to go the extra mile and watch his diet as well as do extra dryland reps at home. this dedication to the sport definitely showed as he had major time drops in all of his events and earned two new motivational times including a A time in the 100 free. Our swimmer of the meet is Ryker Swor! Congratulations and we can't wait to see how you do at the champ meets next month!

Masters Swimming



Even our Masters Swim Team got involved in the swim meets this month! The Masters team traveled over to Conroe to participate in the **Sabine Weiser Classic**. A meet hosted yearly by The Woodlands Swim Teams Masters Program. The meet presents a peculiar challenge by being swam as a **short course meters** event. Despite the change in competition length, the team performed great! They even swam the **first relay ever for the masters program**, a 400scm freestyle relay. Below are the notable results from the swimmers!

- **Maggie Baar placed first in both the 50scm fly and the 100scm free!** Her times were 33.06 and 1:08.77 respectively! Her 50scm fly time converts to a blistering 29.78 for short course yards.
- **Coach Jay Ferguson** regressed the reins of her former specialty, distance swimming! She was one of the few masters swimmers who even dared to swim the 400scm freestyle! **She beat out her competition by over :45 seconds**, placing first in her age group.
- **Coach Collin Gray** immediately swam the 50scm butterfly following the teams 400scm freestyle relay. Despite the quick turn around, he placed **3rd with a time of 29.82!**
- **Vaughn Shauss** destroyed his own expectations in every event he swam! He entered himself with a guess at the times he would swim and beat all of them by large margins. Vaughn notably swam **:15 seconds faster** than expected in both the 100scm breaststroke and 100scm freestyle!
- **Coach James Tomerlin** only swam one individual event, but made sure to make it worth it! In the 50scm backstroke, he swam a time of **30.39 claiming the first place spot.**

The Masters Program looks forward to participating in more swim meets and events in the future! If you are interested, please reach out to Coach James - coachjames@swimaqua.org

Upcoming Events/Information



- **December 4:** Championship Season Kick-Off Potluck
- **December 6-8:** Gulf Age Group Champs Swim Meet
- **December 13-15:** Gulf Senior Champs Swim Meet
- **December 20-22:** Gulf Fall Champs Swim Meet
- **December 23:** Team Ginger Bread House Building
- **December 28:** End of Year Challenge Practice & Breakfast
- **January 17-19:** January Iceberg Invite AQUA/SPA Swim Meet

Birthdays



Happy belated and early Birthday to the following swimmers!

- November
 - **Jacob Cortez:** 11/6
 - **Jade Cortez:** 11/7
 - **Toby Sommer:** 11/9
 - **Ryan Nguyen:** 11/10
 - **Heidi Hopman:** 11/12
 - **Annelyse White:** 11/13
 - **Johan Ahlgren:** 11/16
 - **Ryan Bui:** 11/17
 - **Scotty Ragsdale:** 11/18
 - **Shiv Malkani:** 11/23
 - **Whitney Hutchison:** 11/25
 - **Faith Newman:** 11/26
 - **Aspen Stover:** 11/27
- December
 - **Roland Wunningham:** 12/1
 - **Callie White:** 12/08

- **Anne Marie Schladenhauffen:** 12/10
- **Sydney Stover:** 12/24
- **Jaxson Elizalde:** 12/25