

BAC VIEWPOINT

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Preparation for Maximum Potential

If you fail to
prepare, you're
prepared to fail.

- Mark
Spitz

G.O.A.T. had a pre-race ritual. Why not you?



Written
by
Jeff Lee

The process to get ready for your championship swims is one that is very personal and unique for every swimmer. All athletes have their own superstitions, rituals, and so on. This week I am going to write about the importance of these preparations that swimmers must go through to be successful trying to find their maximum potential at any given swim meet.

If there is one thing that has changed in this sport since the olden days of rope lane lines, flat blocks and paper suits it is race preparation. Back in the day, race prep involved a wintergreen massage solution that would be so hot on your body you needed to jump in the water when it was done just to cool off.

Those days are gone, for good reason, but the time commitment to that preparation is something that never should be lost.

At the senior level, swimmers spend two to two and half hours per day for 16-26 weeks training to let terrible pre-race preparation get in the way of finding out what their maximum potential is for their championship meets. This lack of attention to an important race component is more times than not the reason an athlete does not reach their maximum potential at a given meet.

Why has it become overlooked in today's swimmers?

(cont. On P2)

The LITTLE THINGS *part two:* short axis strokes

Written by Paula Lee

Part 1 of this series was about the long axis strokes that rotate around that imaginary pole that runs down the length of the body. Part 2 will be dedicated to the short axis strokes that basically rotate around the hips and midsection of the body. You guessed right, I'm going to talk about breaststroke and butterfly, two strokes with a lot of technique and "little things" that always need attention. Through this article remember your own buoyancy, flexibility and strength will determine what your individual stroke becomes.

It's your swimming signature
Butterfly

The butterfly is the last competitive stroke to evolve in swimming; at one time the butterfly arm motion was done with the breaststroke kick. The butterfly stroke movement is initiated from your hips and power of the stroke is directly affected by a dolphin-like motion. This movement is like that of a roller coaster. It should begin at your shoulders, then your hips, with

the motion like a fish that will end at your toes. The "little thing" of keeping your legs together helps with that strength and power and the "little thing" of kicking up as well as down will help with your balance in the water. There's really no easy way to perfect your kick out of the water, but if you stand up and, while keeping your head and shoulders still, move your hips forward and backward you will be mimicking the dolphin kick movement. You might notice that your knees do not bend a great deal and your core is definitely a part of this motion so the "little things" you can be doing when not in water is to work those core muscles.

Now, like the long axis strokes the butterfly stroke also is impacted by your head position the higher the head and shoulders the lower your hips and legs will be, creating undesired drag.



The whole-body motion is what will make your butterfly easier to swim.

So, let's think about the stroke.

(cont. on P3)

Top 5 BAC Cap
Designs
OF ALL-TIME!!



The coaches have voted!! It was a controversial decision which included one tie that was broken by our Head Coach. But, we have our Top 5 BAC cap designs!!

Read more on P3



“There is no single way to train, or do anything well. You have to keep thinking, keep doing things.” - Alexander Dale Oen

Training into the UNKNOWN



Written by Catie Chang

Swimmers and coaches alike want to plan and prepare physically and mentally for the challenges and surprises ahead. We had no idea a pandemic was going to hit and make doing so more difficult than normal.

Right now you’re not training with your friends, practicing daily or able to be in group settings, and it’s easy to focus on those negatives.

And things return to normal. And right now is a great time to start prepping your body for what is to come when the pool is open again.

It is important to focus on the foundational layers/core strength, build your strength for the season to come, and develop the mindset for when you can hop back in the water.

For those who had to deal with their season being cut short and not being able to finish off what they worked so hard for, it is time to focus on the future. The season is being “pushed back” in a sense, but instead of thinking of this as a break, think of it as a way to get stronger, and do the more individualized training that you particularly need, compared to daily workouts in the water.

Coaches can focus solely on your dryland training and how it will benefit you in the future. Dryland workouts allow us to build a base for your training and progression into harder and more challenging workouts/exercises that will significantly impact your in-water training. Once we can establish a base and progress to more challenging things, it will provide you with the skills/foundational layers necessary to be more efficient and dynamic in the water.



Time for some creativity!!

This base not only includes the aerobic aspect, but also the foundational layers, the core muscles that are necessary to drive your swimming movements. Building a strong core is essential to your improvement in swimming and being able to build a connection with your mind and body.

When thinking about a mind-body connection, you start to understand how each stroke is impacted and that you can easily correct yourself as you gain more body awareness. (cont. on Pg3)

Dryland workouts allow us to build a base for your training

And as we continue down this path, not knowing when it will end, it’s important to keep your eyes on the future.

But eventually this will end, and today we can think about how to prepare for when “social distancing” and other restrictions will end and

Preparation (cont. from P1)

The athletes coming up today are in a society that gives them results immediately. They do not have to work for those results. From their cell phone to social media to news media, everything is at their fingertips. Racing excellence takes more than just wanting and desiring results. The rules of swimming excellence have not changed in the last 30 years, but our society has. So the trap is, we have swimmers potentially believing if it takes



time and precision they will lose interest.

Race prep is a ritual and it takes time for it to work. Patience and trial and error will be required from each swimmer to find what works for them. And, they must place an importance on it at every meet they swim in order to find those answers.

The preparation is both mental and physical. I will say our swimmers do a good job on the mental side of preparing. The component that needs improvement is the physical side. That’s what we are going to take time with today.

No matter when the meet starts during the day the first step to a great race day is allowing yourself enough time to feel wide awake with energy. Ideally, you should be awake 2-3 hours before you compete. With that you need to make sure you are aiding that energy with a good breakfast and a good dinner the night before.

Although there is no specific formula for what makes a great main warm up at the meet, most warm ups will involve some moderate swimming (600-800 yards) that can include drills and kicking (cont. on Pg3)

Cap #5.....



Cap #4.....



TOP 5 BAC CAP DESIGNS OF ALL-TIME

Cap #3.....



Cap #2.....



The coaches voted on 10 different cap designs dating back to the late 1980’s. See #1 on page 3!!

Written by BAC Coaching Staff

Train. Unknown cont. from Pg2

With increased body awareness through dryland training, you can determine when your stroke feels “off” and can train yourself how to correct that feeling during practice and eventually during races.

Rather than seeing this unexpected offseason as a delay, view it as a new opportunity to prepare in ways you never thought possible. Look at pools being closed as an opportunity for building a strong base for the season. Work to establish an aerobic base, focus on fast-twitch muscle training with circuits, and prepare for having a strong start to the water training.

Dryland training will still be essential when we can get back in the pool. The dryland training currently being offered is based on what the season’s dryland will look like. Getting a head start will allow you to get stronger and build at a pace that is more individualized than in practice.

Each dryland workout is based on the equipment you have available at home, what areas can be improved based on each swimmer, and how to gain strength through the core and the muscles needed to enhance your power in the water.

The equipment we had access to during our training at the pool was used almost daily because it focused on the muscles that needed to be addressed for you to become a more efficient and stronger swimmer. Now we need to focus on the equipment you each have access to at home to help you make progress on land that will eventually translate to the water.

Not only will you build stronger muscles, but it also focuses on your aerobic base. Maintaining a strong aerobic base will allow you to ease back into the water when the time comes. We need this to get stronger, and we have attempted this in the past of offering dryland workouts to swimmers during the offseason. It greatly benefited them and offered a different and individualized way to cross-train and prepare for the in-water work to come. It also eased them into the season and helped the swimmers start stronger and build to faster, more challenging workouts than before.

Looking ahead, there are many questions, the biggest of which is, “when can we get back in the water?” As we do not have an answer right now, mentally preparing for the day it does happen will allow you to hit the ground running and progress at faster rates. Positivity is essential and allows you to focus on the end goal. Every swimmer has a specific goal, or the time they want to achieve, or specific cut, but would that be possible without training?

Take the 2020 Olympics, which have been postponed to 2021. For many swimmers, this postponement is devastating news, but how you handle disappointment defines your passion and dedication for the sport. Swimmers may be devastated at the news, but it can also provide a new fire and motivation to focus on that will get them ready for their end goal. There is light at the end of the tunnel, a new target to focus on.

Turning it into a positive rather than a negative is what will get them to the 2021 Olympic stage. This is an excellent example of how there are many unknowns and things change daily, but there is an end goal and now is the time to prepare and challenge yourself to get there.

A strong dryland foundation will allow us to challenge you Senior Coach Catie Chang

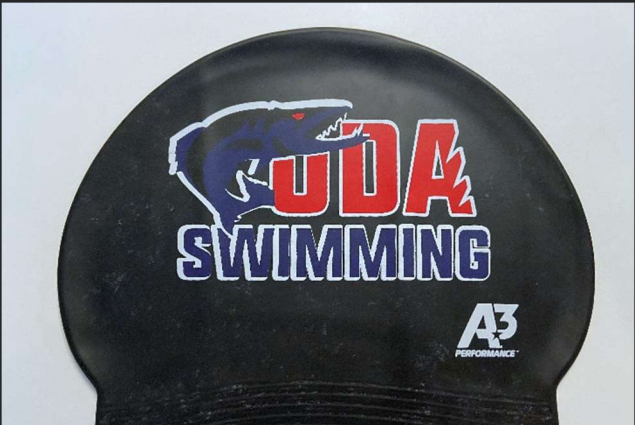
Eventually we will be able to return to the pool. You are the only one who can decide how that will go. There won’t be a grace period, no so-called “captains week” to ease back into the water. It will be hard, but you have the chance to make it easier for yourself by controlling how you prepare. Now is the time to physically prepare to ensure you are ready when the time comes.

Through dryland training, we can focus on your strengths and areas of improvement that will enhance your powerhouse in the water. We can focus on the aerobic training necessary to prepare you for the aerobic sets that are to come.

Things will be different when we get back in the water, but a strong dryland foundation will allow us to challenge you physically and mentally to be a stronger swimmer. If you can get through this, you can get through anything. In the long run, you are ready for what is to come and you put in the work when it mattered most. For you, the work is set up to build a base for in-water, progress to more challenging workouts and prepare to get going right away when the pool is open.

Focus on the positive and the road ahead, and all of it will come together nicely to provide you with the result you have been dreaming about so much.

#1 CAP DESIGN IS ...



Our current cap wins!!

Preparation (from Pg2)

along with the swimming, a considerable number of higher-intensity interval swim (1:00) in which the swimmer prepares to race, and some all-out sprints or specific pace work, this followed by some low intensity swimming. Competitions present their own unique challenges from not having a warm-up pool to having a short period between events. Knowing when the swimmer arrives at the meet is half the solution: Know if the site has a warm-up pool and how much time you have between events.

WARM-UP POOL

With multiple events at a meet a swimmer will need to warm-up numerous times during the day, the first warm-up of the day being the most comprehensive the subsequent warm-ups during the day between events will be shorter. However, they should follow the same general guidelines: start with easy swimming and then use higher intensity swims to elevate the heart rate and warm the body. Some other guidelines for these shorter warm-ups are:

- If possible, get back in the water 15-20 minutes prior to your next race - Use mostly easy swimming at 50-60% effort
- Gauge your intensity. Swim hard enough to get your body warm but not so hard that you are exhausted
- Finish pre-event warm-up as close to the race as possible, ideally 5 minutes before the start of the race

NO WARM-UP POOL

Like in-water warm-ups during the meet, dryland warm-ups will have two components: a static warm-up and a dynamic warm-up. The general warm-up is a moderate activity that warms the muscle groups to elevate the body temperature. Light jogging, jumping rope are good options. The general warm-up should last 5 to 10 minutes.

The dynamic warm-up exercises are designed to improve flexibility while keeping the heart rate and temperature elevated. Specific muscle groups to be used in swimming should be the focus of the dynamic warm-up. The exercise should be done for 15-30 seconds. The total time should be about 5 to 10 minutes.

SHORT REST

As soon as you finish your race you should be headed to the warm-up pool with a water bottle in hand. With 30 minutes before your next race you will have time to talk to your coach. A 15 minute time period is too short to eat any kind of solid food, but your body will need carbohydrates in some form of fluid to accelerate the recovery. The goal here is to hydrate yourself after a race. To warm down the first goal is to get your heart rate down. Do this with consistent steady state swimming. Include some kicking to get the lactate out of your legs. Given that 60 percent of your energy is coming from below your waist, keeping your legs active will help recovery.

Great performances come from many sources. A key component is understanding your body and how to recover from your races and how to prepare for your next race. With a little focus, practice, and appreciation of the process you will be well on your way to mastering preparation for your next race.

Little Things cont, from P1
Arms move together, swinging out and forward, the source of the butterfly name. A “little thing” to think about is that your arms just need to clear the surface of the water, think about dragging your thumbs over the surface. As you reach forward with both arms your hands will enter the water right in front of your shoulders. The underwater pull, like freestyle, depends on keeping your elbows high, leading your pull with the hands, not elbows, and finishing outward by your hips. The “little thing” to think about is that the stroke doesn’t have a pause at the end of the underwater pull.

You can work on the muscle memory of butterfly by mimicking the stroke in front of a mirror. Keep those arms straight, moving the arms from your shoulders. The more you practice in slow motion the better you will understand the motion of the arms.

“Two kicks.” How many times have you heard this from your coach?

The “little thing” you need to remember is the two kicks follow your body motion and rhythm of your stroke. One kick when the arms enter the water and one kick when the arms finish the underwater pull. It’s easy to say, but more difficult to master because typically swimmers have such a large first kick they can’t recover from this and the second kick disappears.

The “little thing” to think about is to make the dolphin kicks small. Try not to over-kick on the entry of the arms. This will help the entire rhythm of the butterfly and help to keep your body in the correct position. When put together, all of those “little things” will help you on the way to a better, easier butterfly.

Breaststroke

This stroke, like all the rest, is a stroke that will develop over time and with lots of practice. Rarely do two swimmers swim this stroke exactly the same, but there are "little things" that make up the stroke and should be a part of every swimmer’s stroke. Let’s talk about a “little thing” you can do with your underwater pull. Once again it will be about your elbows staying high. Right from the beginning you should think “elbows high,” then instead of pulling your elbows in to your sides you will bring your elbows together and shoot your hands forward.

Yes, you will have less time to breathe, but the “little thing” to remember is to breathe deeply and exhale every stroke.

Breaststroke, unlike the long axis strokes, has distinct timing like the butterfly. Your stroke begins with the pull and ends with the kick and glide. The “little thing” is you do not pull and kick at the same time. Practice on your bed, pull, kick into a streamline glide. The biggest energy comes from your kick and shoulders moving you into the glide. The “little thing” is to squeeze your shoulders together and lunge forward while kicking into the glide. This little change will lift your hips and give you a stronger finish to your kick.

Like every other stroke the kick is extremely important. It will drive your stroke forward when done correctly. The biggest “little thing” you can do is to keep practicing proper foot position and try to keep your knees from coming too far underneath you. This means when you bend your knees at the beginning of your kick, try not to pull your knees into your stomach. This causes resistance and slows your stroke. You want to pull those ankles up to your hips, position your feet and snap your feet together in a circular motion for a strong kick.

This is the most complicated kick of all the strokes but once you get it right you will see a big difference in your stroke. One “little thing” you can do is practice ankle motions daily. Draw the alphabet in the air with your toes at first one foot at a time and then when you master that do both sides together.

The last part of the breaststroke is the glide. This is also the time to realign your body position to begin the next stroke. Without the glide, the timing of the stroke falls apart. The little thing you can do when swimming is count “one-two” in your head while you finish your pull and go into your glide. That will help your stroke and speed by this small step of reaching forward into your glide.

In Summary

Swimming butterfly and breaststroke is about putting together all of the "little things" at the same time, which can be overwhelming if the swimmer does not practice those “little things” in practice. By practicing all of the "little things," these techniques and motions become a part of the swimmer’s muscle memory. Then when the swimmer enters a race they can put their efforts into racing and not thinking so much about their stroke.

Finally, the process of learning the strokes and perfecting technique is an ongoing challenge of each swimmer no matter how talented they become in the sport. Learning the basics and “little things” goes a long way in each swimmer’s journey with the sport of swimming.

