

Coach Mentorship Grant Report

Annie Wolfe (PSW) visiting National Coach Joseph Nagy

March 20th 2013

Part 1- Going over Breaststroke technique.

The first part of the visit was a discussion about breaststroke technique. Joseph used some pictures and videos to emphasize his point so I could see what he meant by what is good. Mainly, he pointed out the body position and emphasis on good streamlining of the body on each stroke. Hands together, head down, hips and feet in line, toes pointed.

We also talked about the out-sweep phase, keeping the elbow locked, good hand position with palm rotating out. The timing of the head going up as the in-sweep is beginning and keeping the elbows in front of shoulders.

We also looked at the angle of the hips and knees on the kick action, the width of the kick, and the push back instead of down. The recovery of the legs, which should be, toes together to limit resistance and help the feel of the out-sweep of the ankles as well as the idea of bringing the heels up close to the butt.

The timing of the stroke in general, head movement on the recovery, when to kick and the glide knowing that each swimmer can have a difference in the gliding phase depending on their ability to maintain good body position and still be moving forward. The idea of limiting unnecessary movement, keeping the body up as much as possible, making the most of the pull and kick action that move the body forward instead of up and down.

Part 2- Watching

We took six of our faster swimmers to work with Joseph in the water. I loved this part because it's a good exercise for me to coach the "technical eyes". What I mean is being able to see what he was seeing technically, so I can make corrections properly and continue helping the swimmers in the future. Can I see what he sees? I was excited about this part.

We worked on three things. First being the streamline position on each stroke and body position while swimming. Recovering the hand, palm facing down riding the surface coming to full straight-arm, and head in between on each stroke coming to a perfect streamline. Most of our swimmers have a tendency to let go of the streamline at the end of the stroke.

Secondly we worked on the kick. Lifting the heels up avoiding wide knees or the knees going under the stomach, keeping feet together until the heels reach the

butt. Good out-sweep of the ankle and kicking backward keeping feet close to the surface, pointing toes after each kick. The common mistake again was to let go of the feet at the end of the kick making the leg sink down and being apart creating unnecessary drag.

Then we worked on the pull action. Starting with good out-sweep little finger up with strong hand; pass the shoulder creating a “V”. Keeping the head down until the beginning of the in-sweep. Moving to an efficient in-sweep keeping the elbows in line with shoulders (not going back behind the body) palm facing down. Move the hands fast forward keeping the hands and elbows close to the surface. We had couple of swimmers that were bringing their elbows too far back, resulting in a weaker in-sweep and a loss of body position.

In general, I wasn't too bad to see the issues. Most of the time we saw the same thing and I liked the cues he was using to make corrections. Different and similar to the language I use which is good to hear from someone else.

Part 3- Video analysis

With the same six swimmers we watched their breaststroke video. This is the part the swimmers were excited about. It was good for them to see and have Joseph pointing out what he was telling them in the water. For many they were surprised to see that their; “what they thought perfect streamline wasn't so perfect or that the body position up wasn't so up”... Visual images are very powerful and now they have a good picture in their mind of what they are doing and what they need to do to improve. It's also a reminder that body-awareness is important and they have to focus more on what their body is doing and where it is at in the water.

Dryland: Joseph and I also discussed dryland exercises and he gave me some material about this. Mainly how important it is for growing swimmers to continue having a good ratio of body weight vs. body strength as they reach 14-16 years old (girls especially). Doesn't need to be complicated: push-ups, pull-ups, squats and medicine ball can all be used.

Main technical points:

- Complete streamline for every stroke. Straight arms, head between arms, feet together.
- Body position in line as horizontal as possible and close to the surface.
- Good hand position out-sweep keeping elbow straight.
- Head and body move up and forward in the in-sweep phase.
- Keep elbows inside the shoulder/chest line on the in-sweep.
- Move hands beside each other palm facing down riding the surface of the water in the recovery.

- Kick back with acceleration, heel up to bum keeping feet together until out-sweep of the feet. Keep the knees at hip/shoulder width apart while kicking. Finish close to surface toes pointed.
- On the underwater pull, tight body position, recovery of the arm close to the body (cross over), kick later when arms pass eyes.

Joseph is a great mentor. He is passionate about what he does and it shows. He loves to share his material. He is also a good listener and honest. He was prepared and organized.