

## Backstroke Clinic Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023

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### Hierarchy of Importance for Best Practice Swimming

1. Technique

2. Mobility

1&2 were the items covered in the clinic.

1. Strength

2. Endurance

3& 4 are to be concentrated on post-clinic

“Prioritise your efforts for best results.”

The primary importance of technique and mobility was stressed.

### Backstroke Building Blocks

1. Body Position – hips, ribs, chin

Explanatory comments - Horizontal body position. That means hips near the surface, tighten the glutes (don't let the bottom drop), stretch the ribs towards the chin, keep the chin from falling forwards (look up).

2. Kick -tight and light

Explanatory comments – kick from the thigh (not too much knee bend), loose ankles, feet near the surface and not too great an amplitude.

3. Rotation from hips

Explanatory comments – the rotation comes from the hips and the shoulders follow (not the reverse). The head does not move.

4. Mobility around axis

Explanatory comments – as in freestyle, the axis of the stroke is from the centre of the head to the feet. The amount of rotation depends on the mobility of the swimmer.

5. Pull + Push – volume + acceleration

Explanatory comments – Straight arm recovery, entry of the hand (little finger in first) while the other arm starts its over-water recovery, bend the arm keeping the elbow high to try and capture as big a volume of water as possible, pull (accelerate) then push with the hand facing downwards as it comes next to the thigh before recovery.

Swimmers were asked what they found difficult in the stroke. The two points raised were;

1. Legs sinking (see building block 1)

2. Not going straight (one arm stronger than the other – pull harder on the weaker arm and/or weaken somewhat the dominant arm pull)

### Poolside Mobility Exercises

These were performed on towels and would be a good warm-up routine before training swims.

1. Thoracic and lower back stretch - Seated with knees bent and feet flat on floor. Hook right elbow to side of left knee and place left hand flat on floor behind bottom. Open out chest and twist upper body to gain stretch. Hold for 30 – 45seconds. Repeat other side.

2. Hip mobility. Sit with legs bent and flat on floor like a “W”. Try and get knees flat to floor than swivel and change sides, preferably without using arms to stabilise.

3. Lateral stretch – sit on heels (if possible) and stretch arms forward. Walk hands off to side until stretch felt down side of torso. Hold and then walk back to other side.

4. Back + glutes – lie flat on stomach and lift opposite arm and leg while keeping them straight. Hold and then change sides.
5. Torso rotation – standing with feet hip width apart swing relaxed arms from one side of body to the other trying to increase aperture of rotation each time.

In-pool drills (with fins except for the double-arm backstrokers)

1. Hands by the side and kick (establish good body position and kick)
2. Hands extended behind the head and kick
3. Hands by the side and rotate from hips, kick
4. With plastic cup full of water on forehead, kick (if the head moves the cup will fall)
5. With empty plastic cup inverted on forehead, kick
6. One arm backstroke
7. Two-arm backstroke
8. Remove fins and repeat 6 & 7.