

Breaststroke Clinic 25/5/24

Notes by Barry Green

This clinic was well attended (22 attended), and as usual Elena (the coach) did not disappoint. She concentrated on 2 “next level skills” of breaststroke (turns and the pullouts, after turns and the dive).

Many of the features she highlighted applied to the stroke itself. The important considerations are:

- 1.Streamline
- 2.Speed
- 3.Position
- 4.Sequence.

Turns

Line: Straight in and straight out – do not deviate!

Head: Going into the wall the head is looking straight down. At the turn the head looks to the sky during the arm action then in the glide the head is again straight down. “Floor / sky / floor”

Hips: Don’t let them reduce the streamlining or disrupt the required body position).

Legs: Once the hands have made a 2-handed, simultaneous touch on the wall at the same height and not overlapping, the legs are tucked together and move under the body so that the feet are planted on the wall. As the body turns one elbow is pulled neatly in beside the body while the other arm is thrown over and above the surface of the water and extended to the front and met by the arm that was tucked against the body. The eyes at this stage are again looking down while the legs thrust for a good outward (torpedo-like) motion. For subsequent actions see Pullouts).

The turn drill was initially practised at pool side (but caution is required to make sure that the extended arms prevent a collision with the lane rope!). Once this was mastered, the turn was executed at lane end.

Eyes: As described in *Legs* – the eyes look at the floor (pool bottom), look at the sky (during the arm throw over the water), then look at the floor on the push-out.

Overall – fast & neat (breaststroke is the slowest of all the strokes so everything should be as fast as is appropriate, and neat means the aim is to reduce drag).

Pullouts

Trajectory: After the push-off from the turn, the trajectory of the body is slightly downwards before an uptick with the pull-through or one dolphin kick (if advantageous) and pull-through).

Components: Push off, double arm pull through pushing water back towards the legs, one dolphin kick (if advantageous), recovery of hands (palms initially facing the body moving up the body, past the face, to extend beyond the head with palms together and facing downwards. When momentum is dying one breaststroke leg kick followed by the arm stroke). Note: the allowable 1 x fly kick can be inserted at any point in the pullout sequence as long as it is completed prior to the commencement of the first true breaststroke cycle, but most Masters swimmers will benefit from including it at the end of the pullout arm stroke.

Sequence: The order of applying the components. If the dolphin kick is not advantageous – do not apply it.

Head and eyes: Throughout the above, these face the bottom of the pool; until the actual breaststroke is started).

Hands: The double-arm pull-through (S shaped) should not be too wide but should aim to catch as much water as can be handled, then come to the outer thighs before recovery and extension below the body and under the face to the extension position and the start of the actual stroke).

Overall: Neat and narrow, feel the water, line & length. Neat means narrow, with the aim to reduce drag. The correct sequencing requires a “feeling of the water” to work out when the one dolphin kick (if used) is applied and when the pullout begins after the push-off from the turn, as well as when the hands are recovered from the pullout to extend in front of the head. Line is the trajectory, and length of body ensures that there is streamlining.

The wording of the rule:

‘At any time prior to the first breaststroke kick after the start and each turn a single butterfly kick is permitted. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.’