



Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

Sonni – I just wish there was a little more total consensus on the best swim technique to learn for a beginner like me (*or my kids*). You can try different nutrition concepts or bike fits in a day or a week but, swim technique takes time and most really don't have time to try all the different swim strokes to see what works best.

MH

Agree.....that's why (*again this is all my theory after dealing w/ hundreds of athletes for 8 years in a pool*) it can be inherently misguided to assume that a particular stroke works for all types of athletes.

Fact is, you can go to the Olympic games and watch a 100m final and study the **STROKES** of the swimmers in all 10-lanes and see that there are differences.....yet they are still the best 10 on the planet @ that distance and are separated by hundredths of a second. You even hear the commentators comment on the differences and uniqueness in their strokes. (Remember the Japanese breaststroker from the last games who was "unorthodox", but highly effective?)

So what gives?

Here's the distinction.

First let's define "**stroke**".....a specific sequence of mechanical movements that constitute a movement pattern. (*A very quick and highly **over-simplified** definition on my part*).

Different movements work for different athletes....@ different phases in the stroke. (*different strokes for different folks....haha....couldn't resist*).

However, the **PRINCIPLES** of the stroke mechanics (the HOW we do those mechanics) remains pretty common w/ slight variations of degree.

Those principles can include concepts like:

- front quadrant exchange
- streamlining
- recovery
- catch
- grip and traction on the water
- rotation
- etc.... (*several more that I've omitted*)

I think it's a mistake to assume that we, #1), can coach someone to a specific "stroke".....#2), even know what their perfect "stroke" will look like in the end.

What we CAN do.....and my mission w/ an athlete in the h2o.....is to teach the **PRINCIPLES** of the stroke mechanics so that they can develop their own, natural, perfect, and efficient stroke.

I never knew what your "better stroke" would ultimately look like. It would have been a mistake to assume that it'd of looked like mine. Because you are taller, stronger....while I may be leaner and use/remove lactate differently. If we have HUNDREDS of physiological differences.....how can we expect the same STROKE in the end?

We can't.



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What we CAN expect is to practice common (and proven) principles of individual stroke mechanics so that we can develop our own, natural, perfect, and efficient stroke.

And Mark.....don't miss this.....this is a mission-critical distinction, because we do not want to teach a kid a "stroke".....because his/her physiology (that applies that stroke) will be different next year.....and the next, and the next.....and the next.

Strokes (*actual variances in the sequence and it's components*) **change and evolve as the athlete does.....the principles** (*direction we want to facilitate efficient change in those components*) **do not.**

This is my take on it, bro.

Sonni Dyer