



Getting Ready for the Long Course Season

It has probably happened to you. You train for months in a 25 yard pool and then enter the Folsom long course meet. When you arrive at the meet, you take a look at the pool. The lane lines are set up the other way! It looks sooooo loooooong! You stand at the end of the pool ready to warm-up and it looks even longer. Swimming your first length, you reach about halfway and you're ready to flip. No wall! You keep swimming. Still no wall! You keep looking, you keep kicking and swimming. Eventually, the wall comes into sight. A few more strokes and you've finally completed your first long course length of the season.

Is there hope for the long course competitor who trains short course? Yes! Not every one has access to long course and the lack of 50 meter practices does not prevent the possibility of top performances in long course competition. Most coaches would prefer to do at least half of their training in 50 meter pools, however, that is not always possible.

There is a difference in the training and in the skills which are required for the long course events. Studies show that long course events are more taxing on the body than their corresponding short course events. It is easy to see that most long course events are ten percent longer than their short course counterparts, but there is more to it than the extra ten percent.

WHEN RACING LONG COURSE:

Swim to the strengths of long course. Long course:

- allows you ample time to establish your body position off each wall,
- then establish good hip and leg power and an efficient, tall stroke,
- then BUILD your speed the second 25 into every wall.
- The speed you carry in to each wall will help you with speed on the next 50 meters.

Remember: The backstroke flags are very important to backstroke and individual medley swimmers. The flags will be at 5 meters (instead of 5 yards) from the wall in long course.

Here are a couple of training considerations that can be made to better prepare you for long course competition while training short course:

1. Charge the walls. Some people use turns to loaf or get a little rest. If turns are done with full effort, short course training will be equally or more taxing than long course training. Swimmers need to "charge the walls." This means to pick up speed going into each turn, flip as hard and as fast as possible, and kick hard off the walls. Streamline well on the push-off, but don't overextend the glide. This is good advice for swimmers who train in pools of any length for any type of competition.
2. Extend repeat distance. Since most long course events are ten percent longer, repeats can be adjusted to 125 yards in place of 100's and 225 yards in place of 200's.

The biggest keys to a successful long course season - Train harder and Increase kicking.

Recognize that long course competition can be more taxing and commit yourself to a more strenuous all-around program. Add some time and yardage to your practice sessions. It will also help if you take less rest between repeats and do extra kicking. Many top short course swimmers who don't do well in long course often complain that their legs give out. Therefore, plan on doing more kicking and harder kicking.

Get tough and set some goals for long course – then practice! Remember having a more efficient stroke can be a huge benefit during the long course season.