

AUBURN

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Swimming Faster II Video Series



The **Auburn Swimming Faster II Video Series**, with Auburn head swimming coach David Marsh, contains the following titles:

- Swimming Faster Freestyle
- Swimming Faster Butterfly
- Swimming Faster Breaststroke
- Swimming Faster Backstroke
- Starts for All Strokes
- Turns for All Strokes
- Training/Race Strategies for Middle/Distance
- Training/Race Strategies for Sprint Freestyle
- Training/Race Strategies for Breaststroke/Butterfly
- Training/Race Strategies for IM
- Training/Race Strategies for Backstroke

Auburn's David Marsh has put together what can arguably be called the most comprehensive set of swimming training videos yet produced. Coach Marsh and his assistants, who led their teams to the NCAA Division I men's and women's swimming championships for 2002 (women only), 2003 and 2004, share many aspects of the Auburn University programs.

The videos add up to a little over ten hours of viewing, averaging about 55 minutes. The videos are well-structured, and generally set up like this: full stroke overview; specific stroke drills; good use of regular speed video, medium-slow motion and regular slow-motion; participation and comments from competent assistant coaches and athletes; additional overview and review of the full stroke, including any sequencing used; and a neat underwater stroke analysis using a telestrator (think John Madden on Monday Night Football).

Most stroke commentary includes a review of common technique mistakes, and then provides drills to correct them. Demonstrations include on-deck and in-water examples and concise verbal explanations. Streamlining and underwater work are critical to the success of all strokes, and are not neglected in these videos. Key to the help is the actions-consequences-results method of explanation—very helpful to all coaching levels, but especially beginning and newer coaches.

One of the other aspects of this series is the dialogue between the

By David Marsh

Review by Dana Abbott, NISCA President

assistant coaches and some of the Auburn swimmers, which adds a peer-to-peer dimension rarely seen in other videos. This dialog shows the vertical and lateral integration of the entire process, and this common "wave length" may be one of the keys to the program successes at Auburn.

Viewers will feel they have been at a multi-speaker clinic after viewing these videos, instead of being exposed to just one presenter and a small crew of swimmer-demonstrators, as has been the case in many other swimming video series.

There is a wide variety of familiar and new drills in all strokes, and one will find that new ideas are being generated or old ideas are being energized or revitalized. Viewers will also like the absence of commentaries filled with "high-tech jargon," as Marsh and his assistants make one feel right at home with simple yet comprehensive reviews and explanations.

The extensive use of left-right, front-rear, above-below and various-speed video for practically all drills and stroke sequences, coupled with extensive explanation and commentary reinforce concepts and ideas, and do not race from topic to topic. The videos are well-paced, and provide nice stopping-off points that can be seamlessly resumed.

Although not provided, the videos are structured cleanly and presented so well that a viewer can take notes just as if sitting at a major clinic. My suggestion would be that the producers compile and distribute (maybe via internet download to registered buyers, or provide a unique download password with each video) a "teaching points" outline to enhance athlete instruction. (I want the first one!)

The only *real* criticism I have of the series is the dearth of coverage of relay starts, but that may be something Marsh considers "proprietary information" at Auburn, and does not want to give away much about the great relay starts his swimmers have. On the 37-minute tape on starts, less than three-and-a-half minutes are given to relay starts, and only five exchanges are shown. Other than that, you should have no complaints.

This series is excellent. Having watched these types of films and tapes for over 30 years of coaching, I have to say this series is one of the best ever. The absolute best tape for new coaches (if you can't afford the entire set) is the "Training/Race Strategies for Sprint Freestyle." It covers seasonal breakdown and training progression, group and team building, variation and structure of program components, great coverage on tapering, high school-specific race training and, finally, toys, games and race strategies.

This set of tapes, available exclusively through **SwimInfo** (<http://www.SwimInfo.com>) is a highly recommended addition for any coach's library.