



Tri Swim Coach Newsletter

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Summer Olympics

Dear Friend,

TriSwimCoach

I hope you've all been enjoying the Olympics. I was thrilled to watch the swimming, even though it meant being a little sleep deprived last week from staying up late! Just in case you were wondering, today I have an article for you about Olympic competitive swimming vs. Tri swimming.

Enjoy!

www.TriSwimCoach.com

Olympic Swimming vs. Triathlon Swimming

by Kevin Koskella, www.triswimcoach.com

While watching the swimming events in the Olympics last week, I started thinking about how different the freestyle stroke is (or should be) for Olympic sprinters and amateur triathletes.

Many people in the triathlon world think they need to just emulate Ian Thorpe to have a faster time, or have a similar stroke to Michael Phelps to cruise through the swim. For most amateur triathletes, trying to learn from these swimmers is like trying to learn Portuguese when you really want to learn Spanish. There are similarities, but not enough to get you by.

Don't get me wrong- Thorpe, Phelps and many of their major competitors have some of the best freestyles in the world, and parts of swimming science are based on things these guys do in the water.

The problem is, most of the freestyle events in the Olympics are actually sprints.

The 50 is over before you can blink, the 100 is an all-out sprint, and the 200 and 400 are both controlled sprints. The 800 is more of a middle distance event. while the 1500 (mile)



is really the only pure distance swim in the meet. So can we learn from the mile swimmers at the Olympics? Yes, a little. The swimmers generally have lower stroke counts, and aren't relying on their kick as much as the sprinters.

But those swimmers don't have to do a long bike and run after they swim!

So, they can put everything into their swim, and their strokes come out looking a bit different than what we are teaching the beginning level, non-swimmer triathlete. Although we can't use a one-size-fits-all approach to freestyle strokes, there are many aspects I have pointed out that have helped triathletes all over the world that don't come from a swimming background:

- Keep a low stroke count
- Rotate the hips
- Reduce the intensity of your kick
- Keep your elbows high
- Glide with each stroke

These same tips do not all necessarily apply to Olympic level swimmers. These swimmers have reasons for doing things differently:

- They may have a fast turnover rate and a high stroke count for sprinting
- Their hip rotation is not as pronounced- they don't have as much of a need to "conserve energy" as a triathlete does
- The kick may be very intense and strong, especially for the shorter events

Most of the Olympic swimmers have been practicing for many years, and some have perfected a stroke that is less than ideal for a non-swimmer doing a triathlon (i.e. Janet Evans is considered the best female swimmer of all time, and had a unique straight-arm stroke that very few have been able to master)

So watch and admire these world class athletes, but be careful what you try to emulate and don't feel bad that you're not moving through the water with the same ease and grace (or speed!) they are!

[For workouts & drills, click here to see the Complete Guide to Triathlon Swimming](#)

Denver Swim Bootcamp 9/11/04

Only a few days left to get the discount!

Spots are filling up so if you are thinking about signing up and haven't yet, now is the time to do it!

[Click Here to Sign up and See the Active.com Information Page](#)

Thanks to All the Responses for my Upcoming book!

I want to thank everyone that responded to preview my upcoming fat burn/weight loss/healthy living e-book. I'm sorry I couldn't respond to all of you individually as there were an overwhelming number of responses.

The book is due out TOMORROW and I will send something out about the special discount I will give to this group the first week!

Take care and don't forget to forward this newsletter to a friend!



More from Tri Swim Coach in 2 Weeks!