

SRC SQUAD TRAINING

Theme Sheet - Timing Water

Timing is not only about getting the catches together although this does help the overall picture. It is vital for crews to develop a feel for timing throughout the stroke. Probably, the most important stage is to get the sliding consistent and together. If crew members reach front stops together they should more naturally get the catch and drive together and the finish will follow.

Factors spoiling timing throughout the stroke

Recovery

Assuming that the crew has finished the stroke together and the hands have moved down and away together the crew should be set up for the recovery. Reach forward should be followed by steady sliding to front-stops with no last second rush. Stiffness of hamstrings, height of feet and failure to engage core muscles may all contribute to rushing the last 15-20cm of the slide. This stops the boat and contributes to a lost catch. The effect can be further exaggerated by crew members dropping their hands and/or reaching for more at front stops, so that those behind them don't know when to take the catch.

It is important to position your feet so that you can slide forward at a consistent pace throughout the recovery. Also to "drill in" behind the person in front, watching their back rather than their blade. These together should ensure consistent sliding and timing.

The blades should be squared together and as a separate action from the catch. Some coaches advocate squaring as the hands pass the knees, ankles or feet. In coastal conditions these hard and fast rules are difficult to implement. Probably the best rule is to "drill in" behind stroke following their lead. Stroke-men (and Ladies) should always think "square and in" and not allow themselves to be rushed at the catch.

Catch

The main problem here is failure just to lift the hands and drive the legs. Attempting to square and "row the blade in" will lead to a lost catch and failure to row a full length stroke. Thinking of "square and in" as two separate movements will lead to better timing. Similarly, thinking "raise the hands and drive the legs" will ensure a firm connection between the water and leg drive.

Drive

The importance of leg drive with the stroke cannot be over emphasised. The timing and speed of the drive is very much a "feel" issue. Watching the back of the person in front helps but if you are reacting to what you see you are going to be trying to catch up through the stroke. Watching helps to build a picture of the rhythm being set and you simply have to be confident to commit yourself on the basis of what you have seen. In pairs, failure to drive together is immediately evident. Fours are less sensitive but you must be even more aware of those in front of you if drive timing is to be consistent. It is not simply a case of placing the blade and slamming the legs down. You must drive at the same pace as the person in front of you and this will depend on the speed of the boat.

Finish

In many ways this is the easy bit. You can see what others are doing in front of you and follow them through to the finish. It is important to think of drawing long and level and not letting the blade pop out early. If anything you should commit to drawing long and staying in the water fractionally longer than others rather than popping out early. Extracting the blade square then feathering is also important.

Water Exercises

Many of the exercises described in the balance theme are equally applicable to timing, e.g.

- Single strokes pausing at finish, hands away, reach forward, half slide, full slide etc.
- 10 or 20 strokes pausing as above.

In addition consider:

- Single strokes from square blades in the water
- Square blade rowing

Each of the above may be started as single strokes then extended through 2, 5, 10, 20 strokes etc.