Special Sets

Stella Canoles

By Michael J. Stott

Every coach treasures a special talent. Orinda Aquatics coach Don Heidary has one in Stella Canoles, a free, fly and IM specialist from Lafayette, Calif., who in only two years of club swimming has become one of the fastest 14-year-olds in the nation. Two years ago, Canoles was swimming in the summer league at Las Trampas. Under Heidary's care she is ranked in USA Swimming's top ten in eight SCY and LCM events, holding one summer national, two winter open and four winter junior cuts.

Canoles has laid claim to four Pacific Swimming records in the 50 SC and LC freestyles and is a part of the 200 and 400 free quartets. Her 25.71 LCM 50 free is the fastest nationally (13th historically for 13-14's) and her short course version (22.89) third. In the 100 SCY free her 49.76 is second and the 100 LCM (56.79) third. The rest of her resume reads as follows:

SCY	**LCM**	
1:49.84 (14th)	200 Free	2:04.63 (8th)
:54.52 (9th)	100 Fly	1:02.09 (7th)
2:02.10 (7th)	200 Fly	
2:03.30 (16th)	200 IM	2:23.61 (29th)

Outstanding performances at meets like Winter Juniors and the Mesa 18&U Spring Cup have become a calling card. Others have recognized her talent as well. Canoles closed her spring by attending the USA Swimming Western Zone Select Camp.

A Coach's View

"Stella's greatest accomplishments have not been in the pool," says Heidary. "She is as dedicated, mature, focused, positive, selfless *and humble* as any athlete could possibly be. She is an innate leader and an impeccable role model -- and an absolute privilege to work with. The team does not see Stella as an accomplished athlete, but as a supportive, caring teammate who seeks to be her (and the) best in every aspect of the sport beyond the pool. I call her "TR" (The Rocket) for her incredible closing speed in relays.

"Fun Fact: Favorite food is Crumbl Cookie, and she hopes to have her own franchise one day!"

Time Progression – 2022 (summer-league) to 2024

Year/Event	50yd Free	50m Free	100yd Free	200yd free	100yd fly	200yd fly	200yd IM
2022 (rec)	23.99	No time	54.64	2:09.44	1:10.27	No time	2:27.01
2023 (13)	23.67	26.47	51.67	1:55.84	57.51	2:20.82	2:12.66
2024 (14)	**22.89* (4th)**	**25.71*(3rd)**	**49.76* (3rd)**	**1:49.84**	**54.52**	**2:02.10 *(8th)**	**2:03.30**

**NAG Top 10 Rankings*

Training/Set Preparation for 50m Free

Heidary notes that the general focus for Stella is:

- Building leg strength (for last 15m of race)
- Maintaining distance-per-stroke (length and body line) through 50m
- Swimming the race without breathing (and without breaking down)
- Maximizing start and underwater speed to the optimal breakout point

Canoles has done very little threshold work. Her race endurance has been built with aggressive sets like those below.

Sample Workout (SPL – strokes per lap, CU – catch-up freestyle)

Set Type	Set	Notes
Warm-up	3 x 200: 1: EZ free 9-10 SPL, 2: drill/scull (technique), 3: all stroke build	all technique/feel
DPS	1 x 800 free, paddles, 9 SPL, stay long, light kick, breathe 3rd, early/low breath	DPS/flow
Cycle through the following		
Resistance kick	8 x 25 free kick with Power Bags @ 35 – max effort 1-3, moderate fly kick on 4	Tax (work) legs
Speed kick	8 x 25 free kick @ 25 – max effort 1-3, mod fly kick on 4	explosive
Resistance swim	8 x 25 free swim/CU – 6 SPL, max kick, 1 breath, @ 25 or 30	DPS/hypoxic
Speed DPS	8 x 25 free swim/CU – 3 SPL, fins, max kick/speed, breath each stroke @ 20	power/speed
Hypoxic	4 x 60 yards EZ free – no breath, no interval	EZ/light (monitored)
Fly set	20 x 25 fly - fins @ 20 (rounds of 4) 1 – 10m UW/90% effort (first lap feel) 2 – 15m UW/95% effort (second lap build) 3 – 20m UW/100% effort - no breath (closing speed) 4 – EZ free	Focus is building effort and UW, and race maturity
End workout every day with start work		
Race Start for 50m	20 x race start/dives Odd: explosive dive and glide max distance – NO KICK (Stella went 22 yards) Even: explosive start – race UW kick to 15m breakout point, time breakout (work exit, entry, body lines)	Working ten different aspects of race start

Other Sets - SCY

2 x 20 x 25 @ 20	Round 1: no fins – build to max speed, every 4th no breath – *get under 12 seconds.* Round 2: fins – 15m under water all walls – *stay at 11 seconds*	
2 x 4 x 100 @ 1:15 or 1:20 Aggressive descend	Round 1: 1:02, 1:00, 58, 56 – target (Stella will monitor stroke counts and UW kick counts) Round 2: 58, 56, 54, 52 – target (Stella will monitor stroke counts and UW kick counts)	