

Project VDO™

Intensive Personal Video Stroke Analysis with Coach Emmett Hines

I am pleased you are considering getting involved in a Project VDO™ session.

You are about to have a rare experience. Most swimmers never see themselves on videotape. Far fewer swimmers ever experience professional video analysis. To get the most out of your Project VDO™ session I encourage you to take some time to read through the following materials carefully before getting videotaped.

As soon as I receive your video I will do a complete analysis session, going over the tape with a fine toothed comb, using slow-motion and stop-action to identify what you are doing right and pinpointing what needs to change. Finally, via priority mail, I will send your Project VDO™ tape with the entire session - video footage including stop-action, slo-mo etc. and verbal analysis - recorded in the format of your choice.

During the analysis session I will go over a large amount of information, hitting on many details. The Project VDO™ tape is typically from 15 to 30 minutes in duration. This recorded session allows you to absorb as much as possible at the time of initial viewing, spend some time in the pool working with that information, then go back at a later date to review the Project VDO™ tape and absorb more information. you will be surprised how much information and value you can get out of one session by reviewing your Project VDO™ tape on several occasions.

I encourage you to begin considering specific questions or topics you would like me to address during the analysis.

Project VDO™ is Fast!

In most cases raw footage tapes will be analyzed and Project VDO™ tapes mailed back within one workday of when I receive them - but I do travel a lot so sometimes tapes will languish in my IN box while I am gallivanting. If you need a specific time frame feel free to call me (713-748-7946) or email me (ehines@bigfoot.com) to find out about my schedule.

Pricing

Individual Pricing: \$75 to analyze one stroke and its turn for one person. Additional strokes (for the same person) may be added to the analysis session for \$60 each.

Group rate: Additional people may be added for \$60 each (per stroke). For the group rate to apply, all videotapes must be sent together in the same package or have each member of the group on the same videotape. Project VDO™ tapes will be sent to the swimmers directly.

Repeat Customers: If you are a repeat customer you can have your new Project VDO™ session appended to the end of your previous session by simply sending your previous Project VDO™ tape (already queued up to the end of your previous session) in addition to your new raw footage tape.

Project VDO™ Return Format: Your choice of VHS, Mini-DV, Hi-8 or Video 8mm

Shooting footage for submission

Underwater or Deck-only Footage: An important choice you will need to make is whether to simply shoot videotape from the deck with a standard camcorder or to seek out an underwater video opportunity. Rest assured that deck-shot footage will yield excellent results. However, underwater footage will allow you to see things about your swimming that you will be unable to see any other way. See the section *Underwater Videotaping Options* for information about gaining access to underwater video. Everyone who has gone to extra lengths to get videotaped underwater has been quite glad they did.

The Shoot: Once you have decided whether or not to include underwater footage you'll want to refer to the section entitled *Shooting Your Raw Footage* for details on precisely what footage to shoot, angles to shoot from, best placement of the swimmer etc. Providing the correct footage will be vital to getting full value from your Project VDO™ session.

Multiple people on one tape: Footage for additional swimmers may be shot on the same tape. All footage for one person should be shot, then all footage for the next person and so on.

Submission Format: Mini-DV, Video 8mm or Hi-8 videotape formats are ideal but it can also be done in VHS formats (but not Super VHS, not VHS-C, not Beta).

Packaging and sending your raw footage tape

Submission form: At the end of this package of information is a Project VDO™ Submission Form. A separate form must be filled out for each participant. Any specific questions or concerns you want addressed during the analysis should be noted (typed or printed neatly) on the Project VDO™ Submission Form. The sound track of your raw footage tape is not used during the Project VDO™ session. Any comments or questions you put on your tape will be lost.

Mark your tape: Be sure to clearly mark your raw footage tape with your full name. If more than one person's footage is on the tape, be sure to indicate, on the tape label, the full name of each swimmer *in the order they appear on the tape*.

Payment: Include a check or money order made out to H₂Ouston Swims. If you signed up for Project VDO™ on the SwimInfo.com web site then your session is already paid in full unless you are adding strokes or more swimmers than when you originally signed up.

Mailing Address: Send your raw footage tape, Project VDO™ Submission Form and check to:

H₂Ouston Swims - Project VDO
4361 Graduate Circle
Houston, TX 77004.

We recommend you send your tape via USPS Priority Mail using one of the Small (8.5" x 5.25" x 1.75") Priority Mail Boxes available for free at most any US Post Office. Postage will be \$3.20 and 2-3 day delivery from most US addresses is normal.

Questions? - contact Coach Emmett Hines - ehines@bigfoot.com or 713-748-7946

Shooting Your Raw Footage

The descriptions that follow assume you will shoot both above-water and underwater footage. If you will not be shooting underwater footage simply ignore the items that refer to such shots. Your submission footage should include at least the following:

1. A shot from the end of the pool swimming toward the camera.
2. Shots from the side of the pool swimming in both directions.
3. Shots of your turn.
4. Shots of your favorite drills.

You may include other shots as well. I've included some notes on how to achieve the best results for Project VDO™ purposes.

Shots from the end of the pool

When shooting footage from the end of the pool the swimmer should swim straight toward the camera. For above-water shots the camera should be as close to the water surface as possible. For underwater shots the camera should be as close to the water surface as possible.

All footage shot from the end should be done at a moderate pace and include at least one breath within the last several strokes of the length. If the swimmer is a two-side breather be sure to get similar footage of the breath on each side.

Shoot the following from the end of the pool:

One length swimming toward the camera - shot from just above the water surface.

Repeat shot from just below the water surface.

Shots from the side of the pool

When shooting footage from the side, above-water or underwater, the swimmer should be far enough from the camera so that, when directly opposite the camera, the swimmers body just fits completely across the screen without the hands and feet outside the frame. With underwater cameras this will usually be in the third lane from the wall - but varies from situation to situation. When shooting, try to keep the swimmer centered in the frame at all times. Ideally there should be no lane ropes between the swimmer and the camera. In this case the underwater shot should be taken from just a couple inches below the surface. If you are shooting in situations with lane ropes between the swimmer and the camera, have the swimmer swim on the side of the lane farthest from the camera (and the camera should be at least a foot below the surface on underwater shots).

All footage shot from the side should be done at a moderate pace and include at least one breath within the several strokes taken roughly in front of the camera. On each length be sure to catch

the complete pushoff and glide. If the swimmer is a two-side breather be sure to get similar footage of the breath on each side.

Shots the following from the side of the pool:

1. One length swimming right to left - shot from above water surface.
 2. One length swimming left to right - shot from above water surface.
- Repeat #s 1 & 2 - shot from below water surface.

Shots of your turn

Whether you do open turns or flip turns the same shots should be taken. Underwater shots of flip turns from the side are *much* more revealing than above-water shots of turns.

Shoot the following for turns:

1. One shot of turn taken from the side of the pool roughly 5 feet from the end.
 2. One shot of turn taken from a similar position on the other side of the pool.
 3. One shot of turn taken from right over the turning end of the lane.
- Repeat shots # 1 & 2 from below the surface.

Other shots

The shots listed are the only footage required for a comprehensive analysis and they are the most important shots for determining your level of skill and pinpointing needed technical changes.

Faster swimming: Many swimmers like to do some fast swimming for analysis. Simply go back and repeat each of the above shots at any faster pace desired. Please shoot all such footage after all the moderate paced footage is shot. Some swimmers include a race-pace 25 or 50 from a dive.

Favorite drills: Also, if you have one or more favorite drills for your chosen stroke you are encouraged to include such footage as well. Please shoot all drill footage after all of the swimming footage has been shot.

Glare

For all above-water shots it is important to be aware of surface glare. Since a goodly portion of the analysis will be about what happens under the surface it is important to avoid surface glare from various light sources (sun, windows, etc.). The most common glare problems are created by shooting toward light sources. Where possible, shoot your footage with the light source at your back or at a sufficient angle that *you* can clearly see the parts of the swimmer that are below the surface. If you cannot see below the surface due to glare then neither will I. A few minutes spent in choosing shooting angles *before* turning the camera on will help ensure a highly productive Project VDO™ session.

Questions? - contact Coach Emmett Hines at ehines@bigfoot.com or 713-748-7946

Underwater Videotaping Options

Underwater videotaping allows you to see things about your swimming that you will never see on any video shot from the deck. But, if you are like most swimmers, you do not have immediate, direct access to underwater videotaping. We offer the following suggestions for those who wish to go the extra mile to get the greatest value from their Project VDO™ experience.

Check With Your Local Swim Teams First

Before considering any of the following options, check with local swim teams (USA Swimming, High School, College and Masters). Many teams have such equipment and often tape their swimmers. For a modest fee one of their coaches might be willing to tape the footage you will need for your Project VDO™ session. Some will rent out their equipment. Hooking up with a team that already has equipment will likely be the most cost effective approach.

Rent an Underwater Camera

United States Masters Swimming has a Snooper rental program that members of USMS registered clubs/teams are able to participate in. This is a very low-cost way to get underwater footage - especially if several people are going in on the rental together. A three-week rental is \$75. <http://www.usms.org/coach/snooper.shtml>

Some SCUBA shops rent out underwater videotaping equipment. Ikelite hard housings are the standard and are waterproof to far greater depths than are needed for swimming footage. And some SCUBA shops have referral lists for SCUBA divers who already own such equipment and sell their services to shoot underwater video.

Buy a Waterproof Housing for Your Camcorder

Another economical alternative is an EWA-Marine camcorder housing. These are heavy-duty flexible housings manufactured from double laminated PVC with an integrated, optically neutral flat glass port. They are rated to 10 meters (33 ft) depth.

Check out the <http://www.ewa-marine.com> site for more information about EWA housings and distributors. They make an EWA housing to fit nearly every camcorder on the market today. I used EWA housings exclusively for years with great success. I got my EWA housings from Helix (800-33HELIX x42) <http://www.helixcamera.com> - though their web site is new and doesn't show their entire inventory. EWA bags start around \$200.

Buy an Underwater Camera

Some people are involved enough with swimming that buying their own underwater camera makes sense. I know of several who have paid for their equipment in short order by videotaping other swimmers.

My personal underwater camera is the Snooper - a small, sturdy, waterproof, color camera head that attaches to a telescoping pole. The Snooper has an output that plugs into any video viewing

or recording device (TV, VCR, camcorder) that accepts a standard RCA video input. From the same guy, Dr. Marty Hull, who makes Zoomers training fins. Around \$850. Call 800-852-2909 or visit <http://www.zoomers.net/snooper.htm>

Total Immersion also carries an excellent underwater camera called the Wet-Cam It is similar to the Snooper except the pole is an integral part of the unit instead of being detachable and operation is a bit simpler. Around \$800 (color) or \$500 (b & w). Call 800-609-SWIM or visit <http://www.totalimmersion.net/products/131all.html>

The Old Half-Sunk Aquarium Gambit

Finally, though I do not recommend this for the faint-of-heart, in a pinch I have also gotten excellent underwater footage by using an aquarium. I set an aquarium in the pool with a sufficient number of lead weights (SCUBA belt weights) in the bottom of it to cause it to float roughly 2/3 underwater. Then, lying on the side of the pool, I placed the camcorder down into the dry, partially submerged aquarium. The camcorder had one of those flip-out screens on the side so I could see what I was shooting. I made sure there was a lane rope between the aquarium and my subject to quell any waves sent my way. I had an assistant standing in the water holding the aquarium to be sure it did not get away from me. I would not do this in a pool with a lot of activity going on for fear of swamping my camcorder.

Questions? Contact Coach Emmett Hines at 713-748-7946 or ehines@bigfoot.com

Project VDO™ Submission Form

Fill out and submit a separate form for each person to be analyzed. Please print or type.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Eve Phone: _____

Email: _____

Format raw footage is being submitted in: Mini-DV Hi-8 Video-8 VHS

Project VDO™ tape is to be returned in: Mini-DV Hi-8 Video-8 VHS

Is this your first Project VDO™ session? Yes No

Are you returning a previous Project VDO™ tape for us to append your new session to?
 Yes No (If yes, be sure it is queued up to the end of the preceding session so the new session will not be recorded over your earlier session.)

Specific questions you would like addressed or areas you want special emphasis: _____

(Continue on reverse if more space is needed)

How did you hear of Project VDO™? Direct Mailing E-mail Notice
 Word of mouth Magazine Advertisement
 SwimInfo.com web site or e-newsletter
 H₂Ouston Swims web site Other

Send your raw footage tape, this form and your check to:

H₂Ouston Swims - Project VDO
4361 Graduate Circle
Houston, TX 77004.

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Fill out and submit a separate form for each person to be analyzed. Please print or type.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Eve Phone: _____

Email: _____

Format raw footage is being submitted in: Mini-DV Hi-8 Video-8 VHS

Project VDO™ tape is to be returned in: Mini-DV Hi-8 Video-8 VHS

Is this your first Project VDO™ session? Yes No

Are you returning a previous Project VDO™ tape for us to append your new session to?
 Yes No (If yes, be sure it is queued up to the end of the preceding session so the new session will not be recorded over your earlier session.)

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