



# **Sprinting Power (with Olympic medallist Andrew Lauterstein)**

**Podcast 4**

## The Effortless Swimming Podcast



*Welcome to episode number four of the Effortless Swimming podcast. My name is Brenton Ford and this is the sprinting power episode where we talk with Andrew Lauterstein who is a silver and bronze Olympic medallist. He specialises in the 100m freestyle and butterfly and we are going to talk to him about what he does in training, the number of sessions that he does what kind of work he does in the gym for*

*more power, the kinds of things he eats for fast recovery and to fuel his training sessions and his races. He also touches on a very good pacing strategy for any 100m events.*

*So let's cut straight to the interview, this is Andrew Lauterstein who is an Olympic silver and bronze medallist.*



### **How did you get started as a swimmer?**

For me it all started with just the house sports through school. I never really did swimming lessons as a kid; I was always able to watch someone swim in a swimming lesson and then got to the next lane next door and copy. I had an older brother who was doing swimming lessons but I have liked being told what to do so mum said that swimming lessons just weren't for me. So I would pick the brains of the swimming teachers from the side and jump in and paddle up and down on my own. Then essentially from the house sports in grade 4, grade 5 and grade 6 I made the state team and then progressively upped the amount of training that I was doing until in years 8 and 9 I started to get a lot more serious about it.

**You are also a good baseball player when you were young and I know that in your teenage years, how old were you when you had to make the decision to go full time swimming or full time baseball.**

I think it was when I was 16, the end of 2003 I beat Matt Welsh and Joshua Watson, this was four months out from the Olympic trials and I beat the two guys who were the red hot favourites to make the Olympic



team and I think that was when it clicked that I was a pretty good swimmer and I should start taking it a lot more seriously. In that one swim meet I dropped four seconds in the 100m [backstroke](#) and then dropped another two seconds three months later and just missed the Olympic team as a 16 or 17 years old by just 0.2 of a second. I think that was year 11 that I came to the realisation that hey I am pretty good at **this swimming thing let's give it a real crack. I knuckled down for the next year and in year 12 made my first world championship team.**

**I remember seeing that race at States where you beat Matt and Josh, the whole crowd was just in awe of how quickly you had gone. Did you even expect to go that time? Were you doing those times in training? Or it just came out of nowhere?**

Not at all, it was absolutely out of the blue. I was just a regular 16 year old down at Lorne for New Years two days before and then came back and beat these two Olympians and I was up on the lane ropes celebrating. I remember my coach, Glen, was running around on pool deck and then the controversy of the two guys not turning up for the medal presentation just added to the drama of it all. It was a magic pretty moment; I can even remember there was a big photo in the Herald Sun celebrating it as well. So this baby faced 16 year old, who a couple of days before was just chilling out on the beach in Lorne was all of a sudden on the back page of the Herald Sun it was quite a change in those couple of days.

**I bet, I remember that was just an awesome race. That is where it started when you thought I should really give this thing a crack.**

I think so year. Once you beat swimmers of that calibre and with the Olympics just around the corner I decided to really give it a crack and more so give the backstroke a try, because beforehand I had been more predominantly a freestyler and a butterflyer so I decided I would stop those two strokes for three months and see how I go at the backstroke and then after just missing the Olympics I pursued with the backstroke for another 2 years and then in 2007 after probably not making the continued improvements I was hoping to make I decided in 2007 to go back to [freestyle](#) and butterfly and to suss out where I am in the world rankings in those two disciplines to see what events I had the best chance at come Beijing. In the end I stopped swimming on my back and qualified for the freestyle and butterfly events in Beijing and I think that was the right decision to experiment in 2007 because coming away from Beijing with three medals in freestyle and butterfly it was obviously the right choice.



**You got bronze in that 100m butterfly behind Phelps and Cavich, what was it like swimming that final? That was such a big race because that was the one that Phelps just touched out Cavich. Was it your first Olympic and first Olympic final?**

Yeah first Olympics and only individual event and what a spectacle it was. I was actually involved in Phelps' first and seventh and eighth gold medals so it was a pretty amazing experience the whole Beijing but that 100m [butterfly](#) final just thinking about it now is giving me goose bumps. I can't remember a hell of a lot about the race except that when I was up on the blocks and hear Michael Phelps do his trademark backslaps I can just remember my legs absolutely trembling. I felt like I was going to fall in I was shaking so much. Then once that gun went and I was in the water it was automatic, I think that's what it comes back down to is all that training I had done in the past. No matter how nervous you are once you get in if you have done the work in the past the racing come automatically and that is such an amazing feeling when you have given everything you can in training and when you come to racing that's the easy part.



**Yeah that's right its all the hard work in training isn't it and then racing is the kind of reward that you get for doing all that hard work.**

Exactly and that's what my parents often said about why I chose swimming because you put in the hard work at training and then go and compete in a race and get given a time and that's reliant on yourself. There is no giving off a quick handball to someone else who can either kick the goal or kick the behind it's all up to you and the preparations you have put in, in the past and from that time you have given in that race I guess the thing that I liked you can either continue to do the same thing or make changes to hopefully improve you for the next time you step and race.

**You have recently moved to Melbourne Vic Centre with Ian Pope. What does your training schedule look like now? In terms of how many swim sessions, how many gym sessions are you doing and anything else you are doing outside of the pool.**

At the moment I change between 7, 8 and 9 pool sessions depending on pretty much how I am feeling. When I was in Sydney I was... I have been in Melbourne 6 or 7 months now and I made the mood because I kind of over trained myself in Sydney. I was just going above and beyond what I was supposed to be doing. The move back home to be with my parents was more about balance and going back to basics. So at the moment I am just trying to listen to my body and if I can get through the 8 or 9 pool sessions I will but if I need to take one off to recover to come back for the next pool session fresher and faster I will. So yeah it is 7, 8 or 9 pool sessions depending on feel and then I am doing 4 gym sessions a week. They are shorter than they were in the past. So now I am doing, one gym session is upper body, the next one is legs and core and then one upper body the next one legs and core. So I am not hanging around the gym mucking around, when I am in there it is never for more than an hour and its very specific to the upper body or lower body so my whole body isn't always fatigued when I am rolling into that next session. Then apart from that it's just the recovery type things. I see a chiropractor once every fortnight and I get weekly massage and weekly physio and then we are lucky enough to have the ice baths at the Victorian Institute of Sport just across the road from training so I try and use the cold ice baths twice a week as well.

**When you are in the gym is it more heavy weights, less reps kind of work? Or do you go the other way?**

Right now I am going low reps and heavy weights, leading into the meet so working a little bit more on the power. But earlier on in the season I was doing up to 4 or 5 sets of 12 reps so I guess I have left that up to the gym instructor to work out the periods of the gym. Definitely at this stage I am working on a lot more of the power and trying to be explosive with a little bit of contrast training as well. So going from some heavy squats into some squat jumps, and also on the upper body going from a bench press to push ups with claps. So really working the strength and contrasting that with the explosive power.

**That's great, and in terms of swimming training, what do you reckon is the hardest set that you have ever done in the pool?**



The hardest set I have ever done... I think mentally for me the hardest I have ever done. I used to do 10 x 400m's every Monday morning and I reckon I did that, I started training with Glen Baker in Melbourne when I was 13 or 14 and I left him when I was 21, so 7 years and every Monday morning was 10 x 400m's. That I would say is my most dreaded set.

### **Seven years you did that?**

Yep.

### **Wow**

Most Monday mornings would be the 10 x 400m's and that was the session that Glen would go and have a sleep in too. He would write 10 x 400m's up on the board and then walk away and have a nap.

### **So I am bet you're glad you have changed your Monday morning sets.**

Yeah, very much so.

### **Your [freestyle](#), I don't know if you were doing straight arm freestyle before but now you are only doing straight arm freestyle as opposed to bent arm. What is the advantage of that for you and why have you chosen that type of freestyle?**

I started doing straight arm freestyle 2-3 years ago. Actually I was doing straight arm freestyle in Beijing as well, it was more the fact that I was probably concentrating too much on bending my arms and I wasn't able to get them over and get my rating up high enough. It was more of a freedom thing and then also the elasticity that I was able to create that whipping effect through accelerating the end part of my pull and then really whipping my arm over. To be honest I don't think that much about how straight they are or where or how high they are above the water either. I am more focused on creating a constant circle of power with my catch in the water. So when one arm is exiting the water with the recovery phase that I am already onto the catch on the other arm. Then when I am entering out the front it is in the right position and that I am getting on the catch really quickly. So in regards to what they are doing above the water it is always a surprise as to how straight they are when I see video footage of me swimming above the water, because I definitely don't feel like they are that straight to me.



**So your focus is pretty much just on what they are doing with the pull and the timing?**

Yeah, exactly right. Pull and timing.

**What about your butterfly, what are the things that you concentrate on, technique wise when you're training and when you're racing?**

For me my best swim is when I am relaxed and my timing is on. For me it's a timing of the kick, often when my butterfly is not on I am trying to hard with my kick. The kick action for me is more about, not so much creating a whole lot of power out of my kick it's more of just helping me maintain my rhythm and helping me get my hips up too to get onto that catch at the front of the stroke. For me, having the two even kicks and well is another thing that I focus on. So the one kick when my hands enter and the kick as my hands are entering, keeping them the same size and really working the up kick as well.

**You're a sprinter so you are mostly doing your 50m's and your 100m's so how do you pace your 100m's?**

Essentially my best swim and I am going off Beijing, my whole race plan was just don't try. I know that as soon as I start to force my stroke I get stiff across the shoulders and start to rip at the water and not get my catch, so for that its relaxed rhythm with really good power and hold out the front. For me, my goal is to essentially hold a 51 stroke rate the whole race so not really changing too much throughout the race with not a whole lot of a race plan for me it's kind of building into the wall at the 50m and then setting up that rhythm off the turn and holding it all the way through to the end.

**Then in terms of your diet, what do you typically eat? Do you tend to eat pretty well or do you just let it...**

Yeah that's one thing that I have definitely improved since I have moved back to Melbourne and the luxury of living with mum and her being able to do all the shopping and cooking. I have been really good at having just really fresh fruit and veggies and meat. That is pretty much my staple diet at the moment. Anything that is not in a package I am pretty happy to eat. The less that my food is being tampered with the better. So trying to eat the free range chicken and organic where possible so just keeping everything healthy. That was one thing that also led to me getting a little bit sick was that I probably wasn't fuelling my body as well as I should



have. I was trying to lose a bit of weight so I wasn't fuelling myself at the right times. I was kind of not eating before training because I thought that was going to help me lose weight. Whereas now I tailor the amount that I eat around my training sessions. So when I am doing a double pool and a gym in the one day I am really making sure I am getting enough protein and carbs in that day. Then on the days when I am not doing as much work, probably cutting back on the amount of food that I am eating. That's the nutrition side for me is definitely an area that I have improved, and something that I am pretty stringent with. I have really cut back, I found out that I am lactose intolerant so I am not having any dairy and also have cut back a fair bit on the amount of gluten that I am having because I had a DNA test and they figured out that the amount of carbohydrates and starchy type foods I don't really need in my diet so I can survive on a bit more of a Mediterranean style diet of the meats, the seafood and veggies.

### **What about supplements? Do you have protein powder after gym or training or anything like that?**

Yeah I use a Musashi protein powder after the gym sessions and then also the harder sessions in the pool. Then I also supplement a little bit of Branched chain amino acids and I am also doing some beta alanine loading as well, leading into trials. I am still experimenting with bi-carb loading which I will trial again at Victorian State Championships, but in the past that has upset my guts a little bit so I am trialling a different supplementation plan with the bi-carb this time round. So yeah I dabble in a few bits and pieces supplementation wise.

### **I remember hearing from one of the girls at the VIS about the bi-carb soda, and it's a lot of bi-carb soda that you need to take isn't it to get the effect?**

Yeah the supplementation plan that I am trialling this time round is 3 hours out from my race I take 11 tablets, 2 hours out I take another 11 tablets and then an hour out I will take another 10 tablets. I am not sure exactly how much bi-carb but when you are having 32 tablets or whatever it is a lot of tablets to be gulping.

### **That's right, that's right. So have you found it's made a difference or are you still waiting to see the results of it?**

I am still waiting to see the results of it but there is scientific proof that it does something of benefit. And for me, even if it a bit of a placebo effect I





am going to do whatever I can to hold on at the end of that race come trials.

**Yeah exactly right, you may as well try everything and even if it is the placebo effect you are still get the benefit as they say.**

Exactly.

**What about after swimming. Do you know what your plans are once you finish up with swimming?**

Well at this stage I have started doing some work with a swimwear brand Engine, so I have started helping out with events and a little bit of product development with Engine and that's one of my passions away from the pool, is swimwear brand at Engine. I know that I want to do some travelling where I'm not going to and from a hotel to a black line. So to really get out and travel for a good six months and then the other passion that I have outside the pool is coffee and café's. So potentially opening a café with another couple of swimmers which is somewhere down the track but that is something that sounds like a lot of fun and something that I can see myself doing for the rest of my life.

**Sounds good, thanks very much for being on the call with me and giving all these great tips because I know I have got a lot out of it and I have no doubt everyone that listens will be able to get a lot out of it too.**

**Good luck for the Olympic trials and I will see you on the weekend at States and it has been great chatting with you.**

Beautiful, Thanks Brenton.

**Cool thanks mate.**

See you soon.

*Let's re-cap on some of the things that Andrew mentioned; the first one is swim to how you feel. So he said that he does 7, 8 or 9 sessions a week depending on how his body is feeling. So if he has had a hard week and he is not able to back up the next session he will take one or two sessions off that week. Which I think is a really good way to go about your training. If you are going to go to a swim session and you are just going*



*to train rubbish then you may as well just take it off, recover and come back to the next session ready to go.*

*He also mentioned his racing strategy for 50m's and 100m's is not trying. What he means by that is not to go out there and swim easy. It's to go out there and relax and let your body do its thing that you have been training for. If you try and force yourself to swim fast that's when you stiffen up and your muscles are tense and you are not able to get that relaxed flow and rhythm that you would normally have if you go out there and relax in a race.*

*He also talked about contrast training in the gym where he will do some heavy exercises, whether that's dead lifts or something with the arms it might be bench press and then he will go straight into a lighter exercise. So say if he is doing bench press he will do some heavy weights and then go straight into push ups with a clap. That is a good way to get that little bit more from each of your exercises.*

*He also talked about eating well and the less that his food has been handled the better. So he said that prior to this year he was not really eating much before he would train so he didn't have the fuel to keep his body going because he thought it would help him lose weight. But you need to have that fuel available for your body to use during the training session or it is going to be very difficult for you to get your good times in training and get the benefit from it. So if you can eat just a little bit, enough to fuel yourself for that session that's the best way to go.*

*He also talked about racing is the only benchmark. So you can do as good a times as you want in training but the only real benchmark comes down to racing. So it's a good indication of where you're at and what you may need to work on after you finish racing.*

*This has been the sprinting power episode of the Effortless Swimming podcast, thanks again for joining me. We will be back again next week with another guest talking about sprinting.*

*Don't forget to go to the iTunes store and rate the podcast and leave a comment if you like and we will see you back here next week.*

