

Joint Under and Over Water Calibration of a Swimmer Tracking System

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Abstract: This paper describes a multi-camera system designed for capture and tracking of swimmers both above and below the surface of a pool. To be able to measure the swimmer's position, the cameras need to be accurately calibrated. Images captured below the surface provide a number of challenges, mainly due to refraction and reflection effects at optical media boundaries. We present practical methods for intrinsic and extrinsic calibration of two sets of cameras, optically separated by the water surface, and for stitching panoramas allowing synthetic panning shots of the swimmer.

1 INTRODUCTION

In competitive swimming, being able to measure and analyze a swimmer's movements during training can be very useful in identifying weaknesses and for tracking progress. In this paper we describe parts of a real-time computer vision system designed for this purpose, with focus on the calibration of the camera rig and the problems of underwater imaging arising from refraction effects.

First we consider the problem of calibrating a combined over- and underwater camera setup. Calibration is necessary to be able to compute the swimmer's position from image projections, and to generate synthetic panning views following the swimmer using stationary cameras. In Section 3, we describe the process of intrinsic and extrinsic calibration, and how we deal with the problems arising from refraction and reflection at optical media boundaries.

The second problem we consider in this paper regards generating visually pleasing images from the cameras. To accomplish this, all geometric distortions must be neutralized along with lens vignetting, chromatic aberration and exposure variations. In Section 4, we present practical methods for achieving these goals, and for stitching together images from the stationary cameras allowing synthetic panning shots of the swimmer.

To illustrate the effectiveness of our approach we conclude the paper with full-length stitched over- and underwater panoramas of the pool along with example output from the complete vision system.

1.1 Related Work

The literature on camera calibration is vast and spans many decades, but the calibration of cameras under refraction has received little attention until recently. (Agrawal et al., 2012) present a method for determining camera pose and refractive plane parameters from a single image of a known calibration object using eight point correspondences. (Chang and Chen, 2011) solves the relative and absolute pose problems of cameras observing structure through a common horizontal flat refractive surface, given that the gravity vector is known, while (Jordt-Sedlazeck and Koch, 2013) rely on iterative optimization for determining relative and absolute pose when the refractive planes are known relative to the cameras. (Kang et al., 2012) solve relative and absolute pose optimally under the L_∞ -norm given known rotations. However, in the application considered here, relative poses of the cameras and refractive plane parameters are known to a sufficient degree so that only the absolute pose of a calibration object needs to be computed before non-linear iterative optimization is applied. In (Jordt-Sedlazeck and Koch, 2013) efficient refractive bundle adjustment is performed using the Gauss-Helmert model; in contrast, our method of computing the forward projection through refractive media allows bundle adjustment using standard non-linear least-squares solvers which typically do not implement equality constraints.

2 CAMERA SETUP

The system consists of two rows of cameras mounted along the long edge of a 50 m swimming pool; one row looking down at the surface from above, and one row below the water line observing the pool through glass windows (see Figure 1). The cameras are oriented to observe one of the lanes in the pool. All cameras are synchronized so that matches of moving calibration markers between cameras are known to correspond to the same spatial location.

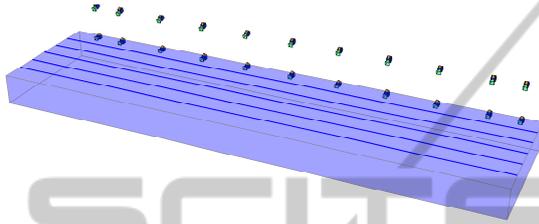


Figure 1: The system setup with two rows of cameras along the pool observing the middle lane.

3 CALIBRATION

The aim of calibration is to determine the intrinsic and extrinsic parameters of all the cameras in a joint coordinate system. The system at hand presents two major difficulties: the underwater cameras experience refraction effects at the air–glass and glass–water interfaces, and total internal reflection at the water surface means no objects above the surface are visible to the underwater cameras. Likewise, unpredictable refraction effects due to surface waves means observations of underwater objects from above the pool are unreliable.

The calibration process consists of the following steps:

1. Intrinsic in-air calibration of all cameras
2. Capture calibration object
3. Detect calibration markers
4. Initialize calibration object pose and camera extrinsic parameters
5. Refine parameters using bundle adjustment.

Below, we describe these in more detail.

3.1 Intrinsic Calibration

All cameras are calibrated in air, i.e. without the refractive interface, recovering focal length, principal point and lens distortion parameters prior to full system calibration. We use the standard method (Zhang,

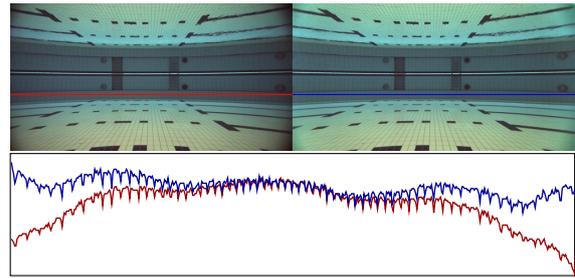


Figure 2: Devignetting result. On the left the original image, on the right the devignetted and below the intensity profiles of the indicated lines. The vignetting effect is severe near the corners of the image and cannot be corrected with the adopted model. However, these parts of the image are not used in the panorama generation due to the horizontal overlap between cameras.

1999) and the distortion model of (Heikkila and Silven, 1997). The wide-angle lenses used also exhibit a significant degree of vignetting which must be compensated for to produce seamless stitching of the images. We model each color channel of the vignettted image as $I_{\text{vig}}(r, \theta) = I(r, \theta)(1 + c_1 r^2 + c_2 r^4 + c_3 r^6)$ where the origin is taken to be the recovered principal point. The parameters c_i can be estimated independently for each channel using linear least-squares fitting to images taken of evenly lit single-color flat surfaces. For the underwater cameras, we use images of the opposite pool wall for this purpose, taken after the cameras have been mounted. This ensures the vignetting effect produced by Fresnel reflection at the glass interfaces is also accounted for, although it is quite weak. Figure 2 shows a result of the method.

3.2 The Calibration Object

As mentioned above, total internal reflection and surface waves means no single point can be observed simultaneously by both an underwater and a wall-mounted camera. The solution is to use a semi-submersed known rigid calibration object, different parts of which can be observed simultaneously by the two sets of cameras. The object was chosen as a vertical straight rod with easily recognizable markings at known intervals; we used eight bright-yellow balls, four mounted below and four above a polystyrene foam flotation device. A more elaborate rig with two- or three-dimensional structure would give additional calibration constraints, but also be more unwieldy and difficult to construct and use. The floating rig is towed around the pool while capturing images making sure to cover each camera's field of view.

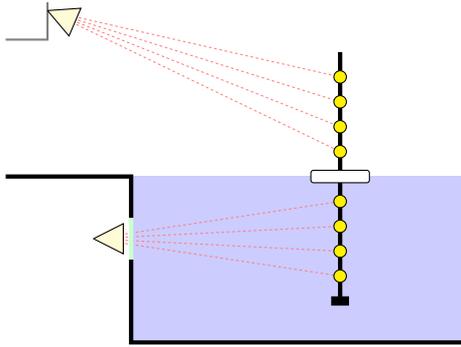


Figure 3: The cameras mounted below the waterline only see the bottom half of the calibration object, and the wall-mounted cameras only the top half.

3.3 Marker Detection

The marker detection and localization is performed in three steps. First all pixels are classified based on color content using a support vector machine (SVM) on a transformed color space, then the SVM response map is thresholded and connected components are identified. The obtained regions are then filtered with respect to shape to obtain the final potential marker locations used for solving the pose problem (see Section 3.4).

3.3.1 SVM and Color Transform

The markers have uniform and distinct color. However, due to light absorption in water, the color in the underwater cameras varies with distance. The available fluorescent lighting above the pool has a fairly narrow spectrum which also makes color differentiation more difficult. In addition, specularities and reflections in the water surface may also appear yellow. For these reasons a linear SVM classifier based only on RGB channels proved insufficient for segmenting the markers. To mitigate the issues of varying light conditions, and improve the detection of yellow, the images are converted to the CMYK color space with the non-linear transformation

$$\begin{aligned} K &= \min(1 - R, 1 - G, 1 - B) \\ C &= \frac{1 - R - K}{1 - K} \\ M &= \frac{1 - G - K}{1 - K} \\ Y &= \frac{1 - B - K}{1 - K}. \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

To further augment the input data to the SVM, all second order combinations of the chromatic components are added to the feature vector. For each pixel p_k the

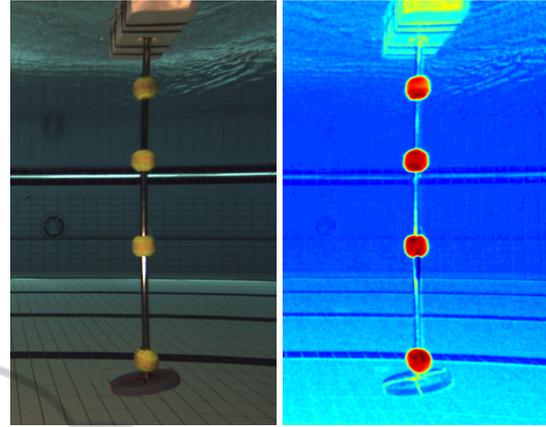


Figure 4: Example of SVM performance. The calibration tool and the SVM response. The SVM is trained on a different sample image.

feature v_k is taken as

$$v_k = [C, M, Y, C^2, M^2, Y^2, CM, CY, MY, K]_k^T,$$

with $[C, M, Y, K]_k$ the color information at the pixel location.

Separate classifiers are constructed for over and underwater cameras using the standard linear soft margin SVM formulation, solving

$$\begin{aligned} \min_{W, b, \zeta} \quad & \frac{1}{2} W^T W + C \sum_k \zeta_k \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & t_k (W^T v_k + b) - 1 \geq 1 - \zeta_k, \quad k = 1, \dots, N \\ & \zeta_k \geq 0, \quad k = 1, \dots, N, \end{aligned}$$

where W , b are the sought SVM parameters, ζ an allowance of points being placed on the wrong side of the hyperplane, and t_k a $\{-1, 1\}$ indicator. Positive and negative samples are extracted from a single representative image for each of the classifiers. The penalty C is selected to be fairly large while still giving feasible solutions.

A representative example of the detection using the trained SVM is shown in Figure 4.

3.3.2 Region Properties

As the markers are spherical the sought regions should be conics. A reasonable simplification is to search for approximately circular regions. A simple confidence measure of how circular a region is was devised as the following:

1. Discard all regions whose area is smaller than a disc of radius 5 pixels or larger than a disc of radius 50.

2. Estimate two radii (r_{\min} , r_{\max}) based on the regions' second order moments, i.e. do ellipse fitting.
3. Create two circular regions around the centre with the sizes r_{\min} and $3r_{\min}$.
4. Score based on the ratio of region inside the inner circle to region in the larger circle.

Regions are then culled based on relative response where regions whose confidence is below a ratio of 20% of the maximum confidence are discarded. The midpoints of the remaining regions are used as candidates for the markers when solving for the calibration stick pose.

3.4 Solving for the Stick Pose

We model the stick as points on a line. The pose of the stick relative to a perspective camera can be uniquely determined (up to rotation around its own axis) from the projection of three markers in a single image, given their absolute positions on the stick. Unlike the general 3-point pose problem, where the points are not collinear, this can be solved easily in closed form using simple trigonometry. Consider Figure 5, where C represents the known camera center and $D_{1,2}$ the known distances between the markers. If we can compute two of the depths x , y or z , the pose relative to the camera can be inferred. From the law

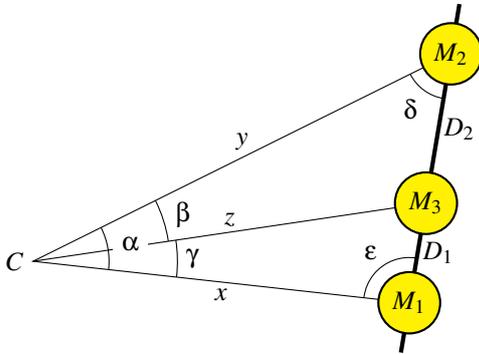


Figure 5: Three markers on the calibration rod viewed by a camera.

of sines we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\sin \epsilon}{y} &= \frac{\sin \delta}{x} = \frac{\sin \alpha}{D_1 + D_2}, \\
 \frac{\sin \epsilon}{z} &= \frac{\sin \gamma}{D_1}, \quad \frac{\sin \delta}{z} = \frac{\sin \beta}{D_2} \\
 \Rightarrow \frac{z}{x} &= \frac{\sin \delta/x}{\sin \delta/z} = \frac{D_2 \sin \alpha}{(D_1 + D_2) \sin \beta} \equiv K_x \\
 \frac{z}{y} &= \frac{\sin \epsilon/y}{\sin \epsilon/z} = \frac{D_1 \sin \alpha}{(D_1 + D_2) \sin \gamma} \equiv K_y.
 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

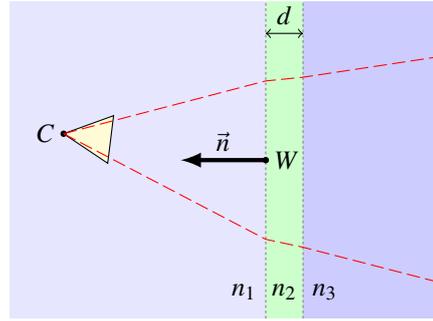


Figure 6: Each underwater camera C views the pool through a glass pane of thickness d mounted at W and with normal vector \vec{n} .

From the law of cosines, $D_1^2 = x^2 + z^2 - 2xz \cos \gamma$. Substituting $z = xK_x$, solve for $x = D_1 / \sqrt{K_x^2 - 2K_x \cos \gamma + 1}$ and $y = xK_x / K_y$ (note that the argument to the square root is always non-negative). Given the normalized image projections $m_{1,2,3}$ of the markers $M_{1,2,3}$ in homogeneous coordinates, scaled so that $\|m_{1,2,3}\| = 1$, we can compute $\cos \gamma = m_1 \cdot m_3$, $\sin \alpha = \|m_1 \times m_2\|$, $\sin \beta = \|m_2 \times m_3\|$ and $\sin \gamma = \|m_1 \times m_3\|$, and thus x and y .

The fourth marker provides redundancy and is used to verify the marker detection in a RANSAC (Fischler and Bolles, 1981) scheme. By ordering candidate marker locations vertically, potential correspondences can be established and tested against the re-projection error. All markers are included in a subsequent non-linear refinement step where the re-projection error in the image is minimized over rigid motions of the calibration object.

However, before this procedure can be applied to the underwater images, refraction effects in the windows through which the object is viewed must be taken into account.

3.5 Refraction

The underwater cameras observe the pool through glass windows (see Figure 6). To obtain a physically accurate model of the imaging system, the refraction effects at both optical medium interfaces must be taken into account. These are governed by Snell's law,

$$n_1 \sin \theta_1 = n_2 \sin \theta_2 \tag{3}$$

where $\theta_{1,2}$ are the angles of incidence and $n_{1,2}$ the respective indices of refraction of the two media. Given a ray passing through a point P_1 in the direction \vec{u}_1 and an interface plane passing through the point W with normal vector \vec{n} , the refracted ray (P_2, \vec{u}_2) may be computed as

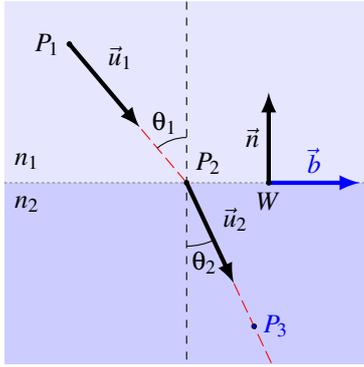


Figure 7: Refraction of ray (P_1, \vec{u}_1) into (P_2, \vec{u}_2) under Snell's law.

$$P_2 = P_1 - \frac{\vec{n} \cdot (P_1 - W)}{\vec{n} \cdot \vec{u}_1} \vec{u}_1 \quad (4)$$

$$\vec{u}_2 = \frac{n_1}{n_2} \vec{u}_1 + \left(\frac{n_1}{n_2} \cos \theta_1 - \text{sign}(\cos \theta_1) \cos \theta_2 \right) \vec{n}$$

where $\cos \theta_1 = -\vec{n} \cdot \vec{u}_1$

$$\cos \theta_2 = \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{n_1}{n_2} \right)^2 (1 - \cos^2 \theta_1)},$$

given that \vec{n} and \vec{u}_1 have been normalized to unit length (see Figure 7 for an illustration). Note that no trigonometric functions need to be evaluated. The above formula only works in the backward direction, i.e. given the ray corresponding to an image point, we can follow it into the second medium. However, we are mainly interested in going the other way, computing the projection of a world point into the camera. This is more difficult; given the world point P_3 on the ray (P_2, \vec{u}_2) and camera center P_1 , determine P_2 so that Snell's law is satisfied (the image projection of P_3 is then given by the in-air camera model projection of P_2). In previous works this has either been avoided (Jordt-Sedlazeck and Koch, 2012), or solved by finding the roots of a 12th degree polynomial (Agrawal et al., 2012) or by numerical optimization of the back projection (Kunz and Singh, 2008; Yau et al., 2013). We will use a variant of the latter.

Note that the ray directions \vec{u}_1 and \vec{u}_2 must lie in the same plane as the interface normal \vec{n} ; call the normal vector of this plane $\vec{v} = \vec{n} \times (P_3 - P_1)$. This restricts the possible locations of P_2 to the line $P_2(t) = P_2^0 + t\vec{b}$ where $\vec{b} = \vec{n} \times \vec{v}$. Given $P_2(t)$ for some t , we can refract and trace the ray $(P_1, P_2(t) - P_1)$ into the second medium. At the optimal t , the ray $(P_2(t), \vec{u}_2(t))$ will pass through P_3 . Define the signed orthogonal distance between P_3 and the ray as $d(t) = \vec{v} \cdot (P_3 - P_2(t)) \times \vec{u}_2(t)$. Using the intersection of the interface plane and the straight line between P_1 and P_3 as an initial guess, we can find the zero of $d(t)$ using Newton's method. For our underwater cameras, eqs.

(4) are applied twice in the backward direction, first for the air-glass and then for the glass-water transition. Since the two interfaces are parallel, all rays still lie in the same plane and the search remains one-dimensional. (Yau et al., 2013) take a similar approach but minimize the error using bisection, with inferior convergence properties.

On average over a typical range of angles, a precision of 10^{-6} is reached in five iterations using forward finite difference derivatives. While the method is general and does not require the imaging plane to be parallel with the interface(s) as in (Treibitz et al., 2012), it is still fast and can compute the forward projection of two million points per second on a Core 2 Duo E7500 3.0 GHz computer in a C++ implementation. It is thus well-suited for use in large-scale bundle adjustment algorithms minimizing the true image re-projection error, and the algorithm is simple to implement and easily parallelized on graphics hardware. It may also be extended to the case of multiple non-parallel interfaces, which would require a two-dimensional search for P_2 , at some additional computational cost.

3.6 Initialization

Once we can compute the projection of any given point into each camera, all extrinsic parameters may be optimized through bundle adjustment if a good initialization is available. In the swimming pool case, the positions of the cameras are easily measured by hand or from blue-prints, and we assume these to be known, except for the exact distance of the underwater cameras to the glass pane as this number significantly influences the refraction effects. The thicknesses of the window panes are also considered known, and the panes are initially assumed to be mounted exactly flush with the pool wall.

The initial pose of the calibration object in every frame is determined relative to the camera with the "best" view (i.e. with the markers closest to the image center), using the single-view solver above. If the best view is an underwater camera the image will be distorted by refraction, and solving while only accounting for intrinsic camera parameters is likely to give inaccurate results. Since the refraction effects are actually three-dimensional in nature, the coordinates cannot be exactly normalized without knowing the depth of the markers beforehand. We settle for an approximation where the image rays are traced into the pool (using the initial camera and window parameters), and their intersections with a plane parallel to the image plane at the expected mean depth of the calibration target are computed. The intersection points

are then projected back into the images, now assuming there are no refraction effects, producing the measurements we would have obtained had there been no water or windows. This approximation, which assumes the markers are at a known depth halfway into the pool, is quite accurate as the depth dependence of the correction is relatively weak, and is certainly sufficient for initialization purposes.

As was noted in (Jordt-Sedlazeck and Koch, 2013), it is possible to solve exactly for the depth of three points also in the refractive case, assuming the camera's pose relative to the refractive plane is known. The camera and glass then form a generalized camera (in fact, an axial camera), where the back-projected image rays do not intersect in a common point but rather a common axis. The generalized 3-point pose solver (Nistér, 2004) can then be applied, which produces up to eight solutions. However, it does not exploit the fact that the points on our calibration object are co-linear, and we have found in experiments that our simpler solver together with the approximation produces stabler and more accurate results under image measurement noise.

3.7 Non-linear Refinement

The bundle adjustment problem (Triggs et al., 2000) is formulated and solved using the Ceres non-linear least-squares solver (Agarwal et al., 2012). Due to the relatively complex projection algorithm, numerical finite difference derivatives are used, although automatic differentiation could possibly be applied. We allow the glass pane normals and underwater camera distance from the glass to vary, along with all camera orientations and calibration stick poses. While the calibration thus obtained is quite accurate, the human eye is very sensitive to discrepancies at image seams which becomes obvious when rendering stitched panoramic views. In particular, horizontal lines on the pool wall (see Figure 10) need to match to the pixel. To this end, we mark points in the images along these lines, and require their back-projection intersections with the pool wall to be co-linear. This may be achieved by introducing a new variable \bar{y}_k for each line into the optimization, and adding the terms $\|y_{k,i} - \bar{y}_k\|^2$ to the bundle adjustment cost function, where $y_{k,i}$ are the vertical components of the back-projected points lying on line k .

4 STITCHING

One goal of the calibration is to be able to stitch together images to form a panorama of the pool, or

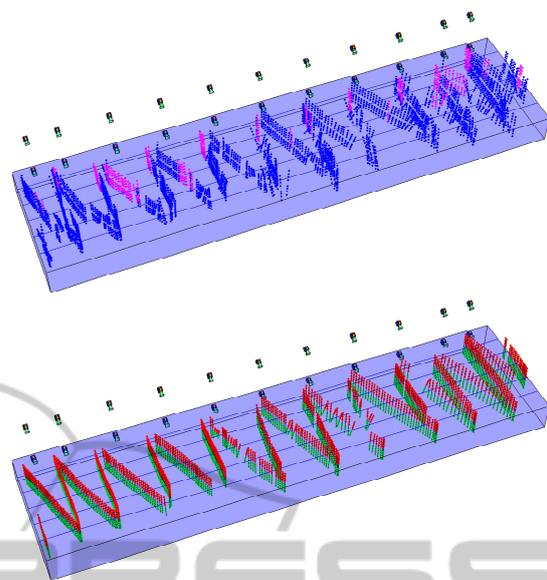


Figure 8: Top: the initialization to the bundle adjustment problem, where the pose of the calibration rod in each frame has been determined from one view only (blue indicates an underwater image was used, magenta above water). Bottom: the result of optimizing over calibration object pose, window pane normals and camera orientations. Bundle adjustment over the 700 poses and 1900 images took 32 seconds at 7 iterations/s on a Core 2 Duo 3.0 GHz computer.

equivalently, panning shots of the swimmer. To render such a view, we define an image plane in the world coordinate system, typically parallel to the long side of the pool. Output pixels are sampled in a grid on this plane, and projected into the devignetted camera images to determine their color. Where images overlap, blending is applied to smooth out the transition. For speed, projection maps for each camera can be precomputed. Since the projection depends on the depth of the rendering plane, separate maps are computed for a discrete set of depths and then interpolated between to match the current depth of the swimmer. This can be efficiently implemented on graphics hardware and allows us to generate full HD panning views in real time at over 100 frames per second.

4.1 Exposure Correction

While all cameras are set to the same white balance, exposure and gain, differences between individual cameras are sometimes visible, particularly near the transition edges. To minimize visual discrepancies post-capture, we assume that the pixel value of a point visible in two cameras simultaneously is described by the relation $\gamma_i I_i = \gamma_j I_j$ where γ_k is the gain correction for camera k and I_k the intensity in the captured image. To achieve even lighting of the stitched image,



Figure 9: Exposure/gain correction. On top the uncorrected images, below each image has been multiplied with the corresponding correction factor derived from equation (5). No blending has been applied at the seams.



Figure 10: The raw images captured by the camera setup along with the stitched panoramas. The lenses used are rectilinear, the distortion effect seen in the underwater views is entirely due to refraction in the windows.

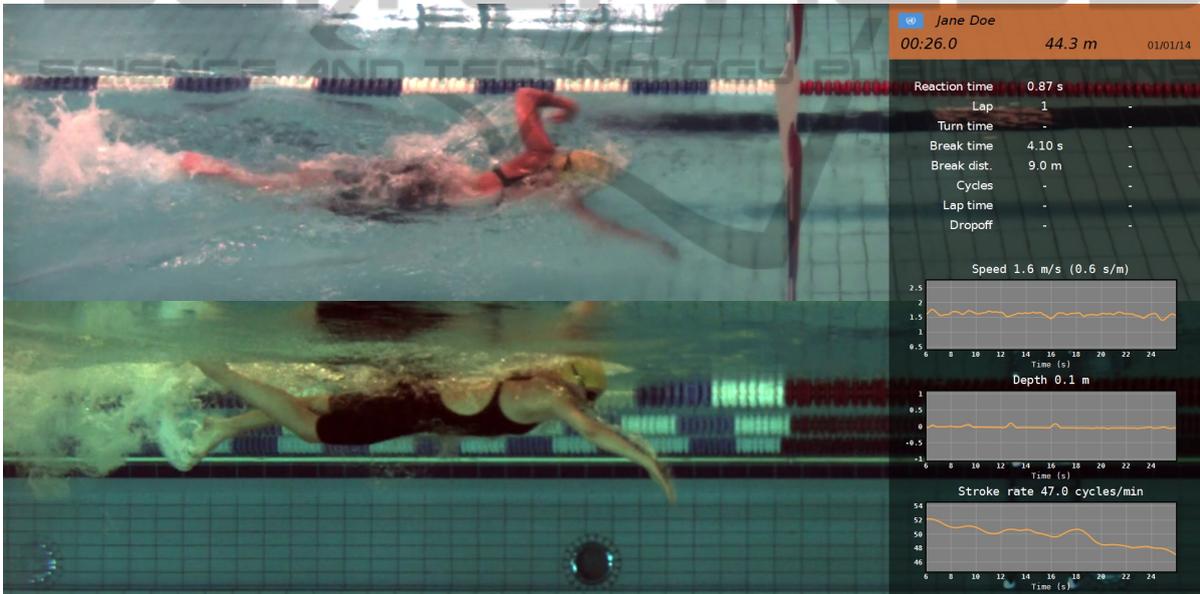


Figure 11: Still image from the final output of the swimmer tracking system. Synthetic panning views of the swimmer are accompanied by performance statistics automatically extracted from the images.

points are sampled on the render plane and projected into low-pass filtered images to obtain the I_k . Each relation above contributes a row to the linear system

$$\begin{bmatrix} \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \mathbf{0} & I_i & \mathbf{0} & -I_j & \mathbf{0} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \gamma_1 \\ \vdots \\ \gamma_n \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{0} \quad (5)$$

which can be solved for the γ in a least-squares sense using singular value decomposition. After scaling the gain coefficients to have unit mean, they are multiplied with the raw images before stitching. See Figure

9 for an illustration.

4.2 Chromatic Aberration Correction

An often ignored fact is that the indices of refraction used in the ray-tracing equations (4) are wavelength-dependent. However, the resulting chromatic aberration is quite pronounced even to the naked eye observing e.g. the bottom tiles of the pool through refraction at the surface. The effect is also apparent near the edges of our underwater images in areas of high contrast. By using (empirically determined) separate in-

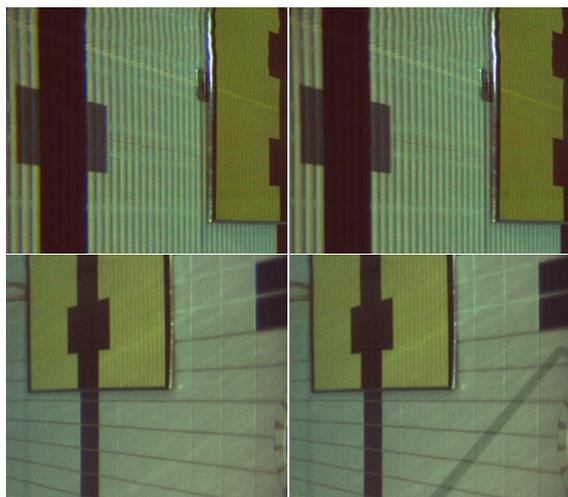


Figure 12: Chromatic aberration correction. On the left, the images were rendered using the same index of refraction of water for all channels ($n = 1.333$); on the right, $n_{\text{red}} = 1.333$, $n_{\text{green}} = 1.3338$, $n_{\text{blue}} = 1.3365$. Notice the reduced rainbow effect around the edges of the black bars (the differences are subtle so these images are best viewed on-screen).

dices of refraction for the red, green and blue color channels, the aberration can be almost completely neutralized, improving the visual quality of rendered images (see Figure 12).

The final stitched panoramas are shown in Figure 10, along with the raw images captured by each camera.

5 CONCLUSION

We have developed an effective and practical procedure for combined refractive and non-refractive camera calibration. We have also presented an efficient method of computing the forward projection through refractive media, and shown how visually pleasing stitched panoramas may be generated. The calibration data and images generated can then be used for tracking and analyzing a swimmer's movements in and above the water. An example of the output of the full system is shown in Figure 11.

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