



## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

More information available on our  
website;

[www.bluephin.ca](http://www.bluephin.ca)

Contact our Head Coach

[olympicdream@mac.com](mailto:olympicdream@mac.com)

# ***So you want to swim competitively?***



The Charlottetown Bluephins Aquatic Club would like to welcome you to the exciting world of swimming. By joining the Charlottetown Bluephins, a Swim PEI-affiliated club, your child has just become a member of one of our country's best-organized youth sports.

This Parent Handbook will give you a good working knowledge of the sport, and answer some basic questions most parents and swimmers want answered. Keep in mind that all the information in this manual is just an introduction to competitive swimming. Please feel free to contact the Bluephins or Swim PEI for additional information regarding our sport.

The sport of swimming has many benefits, including the people you and your child will meet. The camaraderie among swimmers is unique, and many swimming buddies become life-long friends. Swimming provides one of the most beneficial forms of exercise for cardiovascular and overall fitness. This exercise can be enjoyed throughout one's entire life. For example, there are now swimmers in their eighties setting provincial, national, and world records in the "Masters" categories. The sport of swimming is perhaps the most inclusive sport out there. The team also accepts para swimmers ie. swimmers with a physical disability who train on a day to day basis along side able bodied swimmers. Possibly the greatest benefits of participating in an organized swim program are the life skills your child will develop.

These skills include time management, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. Your child will reap the benefits of swimming for the rest of their lives.

Age-group swimming is a fun, exciting, and rewarding sport. Many children improve rapidly during the early developmental stages due to growth and improved technique. It is difficult to avoid the tendency to push young athletes at this stage. The emphasis should be placed on technique rather than power. We recommend that the training schedule for developmental swimmers be flexible enough to provide time to participate in other activities. Swimming at the youngest levels needs to be fun and pressure-free.

After a child reaches puberty, sport scientists and coaches feel that serious training can begin. This can develop into a particularly challenging time for swimmers. During the transition from age group to senior swimming, an athlete may experience a plateau, or what appears to be a "set-back." Large amounts of time are no longer being dropped, "personal best" times are harder to realize and training requires more time and dedication. Many parents begin to question whether a child's swimming career is over at this point. This, coupled with the normal demands of teenage life, causes many swimmers to leave the sport prematurely. It is critical that parents and coaches be very supportive during this period of adjustment, realizing that it will pass. Future performance improvements generally follow.

Not every swimmer becomes a world-record holder, but **all** of them gain from their swimming experience. Supporting your child throughout a swimming career can be one of the most rewarding endeavours of your life. You may soon find yourself cheering at competitions, assisting with club functions, timing during meets or even going on to become a Canadian swimming certified official. Whatever your role, your child's experience in swimming has much to do with your positive support and involvement.

**Bill Calhoun**

Head Coach Charlottetown Bluephins

**We all have the same goal..... to provide your child with the best possible swimming experience**

## **Swimming 101**



***PSSSSSSSST! ...THE STUFF YOU REALLY SHOULD KNOW AS A NEW PARENT OR SWIMMER!***

### **The Beginner Swimmer**

Children join competitive swimming for a number of reasons. Kids swim to have fun, to be with their friends or to be future champions. Whatever the reason, young swimmers will learn a tremendous amount and they will gain valuable experience. When children are finished with their time in the club, they will have:

- the ability to use the pool to their benefit
- skills of the four strokes, turns and starts and racing strategies
- a desire to continue to participate in sports
- a new group of exciting friends

It is important that parents understand what competitive swimming consists of for a first year swimmer. First, the child should start the program with the ability to swim fairly well, (a basic understanding of and ability to do the front crawl or freestyle is adequate). Second, your child will swim approximately one to three times a week depending on the group in which they are placed. Don't worry, the 5:30 a.m. weekday practices do not occur for a few years! You may want to join a car pool to bring your kids to practice - it will be easier for you and fun for them!

By the end of the first year, a great amount of progress can usually be noted in the swimmer's style and strength. They will know the rules of swimming and the four strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and the fifth, the individual medley (an event combining all four strokes). Swimmers tend to become more outgoing and organized. If a swimmer is organized, a lot of time can be devoted to the sport without school marks suffering. Many changes - physical, mental, and emotional - will occur in your child as he or she progresses through his or her swimming career.

## **The Beginner Parent**

This information is geared to help parents understand what they are getting into when they join the swim club. If you have not belonged to a club in any sport before, please understand that you, the parents, are very important components in the Bluephins program. Parents of swimmers form the Board that operates the swim club.

When our club hosts various swim meets throughout the year, you will be required to officiate at them, acting as timers, judges, and a host of other roles. Without parents, there would be no competitive swimming.

Parent-coach relationships are very important. If your child is just starting out in this sport, it is natural for you to want to be very involved. Relax. Our coaches are professionals and they are there only to help your child enjoy himself/herself and to teach skills so that your child can improve her/his swimming techniques. Coaches are teachers and role models. Parents should try to back the coach in her/his decisions, for your confidence and trust in the coach will be reflected in your child. Be prepared to give up your child to the coach for practice and competition. Parents are not allowed on pool deck during practices. If you need to speak with the coach, please do so either before or after the workout.

## **The Swimming Seasons**

Competitive swimming consists of two seasons - short course (Sept-Feb) and long course (March -July). During the short course season, competitions are generally held in pools at a length of 25 metres; long course meets are held in 50-metre pools. Race times are generally about 2% slower in the longer pool, as there are fewer turns.

Swimming in Atlantic Canada is divided into levels of ability by time standards. The levels are AA times and East Coast Times. Beginning swimmers aim for AA times and will progress, as they get faster, into East Coast times. As swimmers improve they will become eligible for meets with faster qualifying times. Some meets have their own unique time standards.

Swimmers are also divided into age groups: 10 and under, 11-12, 13 - 14, 15-17, and Senior. Through these divisions, children will be competing against others who have approximately the same physical and developmental abilities. Several meets a year are out of town meets for those swimmers with qualifying times. The swimmers will normally travel by car or team bus to meets that are out of province. The meets are great fun as children make new friends and gain valuable experiences. You will be amazed at how independent your children will become - eventually carrying meal money and ordering for themselves at restaurants.

Swimming competitions are good for children because they allow swimmers to get to know themselves. Racing creates strong, mature, mentally tough people. If a swimmer has a particularly good race, he/she can feel extremely proud; if she/he has a bad race, she/he must reason out what went wrong. It takes a lot of courage to stand up on the starting block, so parents can be proud each time they see their son or daughter in a race. Just having the courage to swim against and in front of others is a great accomplishment.

## **Parent-Swimmer Relationships**

The most important thing that parents can do for their children is to hold their expectations to a reasonable level. Try not to expect anything that is beyond your child's ability. Work with your child to develop long and short-term goals that you both agree are within reach. Goals are important in that they create a focus in children's lives.

Swimmers can control and participate in their future. Focusing upon best times is probably the most important rule swimmers and parents alike can follow. Parents should also realize the effects of growth and maturation on a child's swimming performances. Boys usually have a growth spurt between 12 and 14 years. They may appear more tired and less enthusiastic during this period because a lot of energy is going into growth. A 10-and-under winner may appear awkward at 13. Girls begin their growth spurt earlier than boys - usually between the ages of 11 and 13. Physical changes take place: menstruation decreases the relationship between strength and body size. Some girls may have to work to regain their fastest times at age 14 that they had at age 12. Be aware of the changes that take place in your children. Try to increase sensitivity and understanding during the times of increased physical and mental growth as these periods can be quite stressful to the child. Parents should also be aware of the peaks that will occur in their child's swimming career. "Peaking" is a long or short term leveling off of swimming times. Every swimmer invariably goes through a stage in his or her career where times do not get faster. For some, it might take a long time to get through this period; for others, this stage may last only a short time. Please be aware of this and encourage your children to work through this period and not become discouraged. Time, hard work and adaptation to changes in physique are what it takes to get through peaking.

## **The Bluephins Program**

A carefully planned program has been designed to allow smooth transition up the developmental ladder. Practice hours and content have been planned so that movement to the next higher group is unhurried, appropriate and in the best interests of the swimmer and his or her ultimate potential. Each group builds on skills learned in the group below, and transitions are logical, based on age, maturity and ability. Teaching is most effective when we can teach similar skills to a group of children who are at a similar stage in their development as swimmers. Training times range from one hour per week for the Miniphin program to over 16 hours a week, depending on age, maturity, skill, aptitude and commitment.



We wish to encourage versatility both in and out of the water. Commitment to goals and to the means of achieving those goals are important lessons to be learned from swimming, but we hope always to keep in mind that kids need time to be kids, and should be able to participate in other activities in conjunction with swimming, until such time as a swimmer's aspiration level makes an exclusive commitment to swimming necessary if the swimmer is to attain his or her goals.

## **Parent-Coach Communication**

Our coaches are continually assessing each swimmer's progress. They are happy to provide feedback to parents at any time and are always there to discuss any concerns you or your swimmer may have. They like to get to know swimmers' parents. They are usually available in person after practice or by phone or email. Contact information is available on the Bluephins website.



## **The Basic Skills**

The four competitive strokes swimmers will master over their swim career are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. Each requires a set of skills and the strokes will be taught by being broken down into their component parts. Other important skills include starts and turns. Swimming is a very technical sport and it usually takes



quite a while (i.e. years) before a swimmer will begin to show the kind of form seen in seasoned competitive swimmers. Be patient and supportive through this process and don't expect too much too soon.

### **What is an Age Group?**

Swimmers compete in different age groups and meets, depending on their achievement level and how old they are — usually based on their age as of the first day of the meet. Provincially recognized age groups are 10& under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-17, and Senior. Local meets may also offer 8 & under events.

### **Attending a Swim Meet**

At the start of each season, you will be provided you a listing of meets that the Bluephins will be participating in. More detailed meet information will also be posted on the Bluephins website and will also be sent to parents via email. It is **up to you to inform the head coach if your swimmer is attending a meet**. The head coach will also be able to highlight for you which meets are priority meets if you have to make decisions about which meets to attend. Although it is not necessary to attend all meets, it is recommended.



# What A Swim Meet Looks Like



The format of swim meets can vary. They are generally one day or two day meets with or without qualifying standards. Championship meets are often 3 days or more in length. Lower level "development" meets often have no qualifying times. Higher level meets, such as Invitational meets or Championship meets, will have qualifying standards that swimmers will have to have achieved in a prior meet or "time trial" to be eligible to compete at those meets. Some meets will be set up as "timed finals" which means that the swimmer will only swim the event once. Other meets will be set up as "heats and finals", which means that swimmers will swim in a heat session in the morning and if they place in either the top 6 or 8 (depending on the size of the pool) will return to swim finals in the afternoon or evening.

## **Picking events to swim**

Throughout the season the coach will generally select events for newer swimmers to compete in. This ensures the full development of the swimmer. In choosing events, the coach takes into consideration any goals that the swimmer and coach may have discussed, the readiness of the swimmer for a particular event and the need to swim all events to fully develop as a well-rounded athlete. For more senior meets such as the East Coast Championships and National Age Group Championships swimmers and coaches pick their events together.

## **Knowing what events swimmers are swimming**

About a week before each meet, you will be provided with information that indicates what events your swimmer will be competing in. Relays are determined at the swim meet and will usually not be marked on the event sheet. Please have your swimmer check with the coaching staff prior to leaving a meet to ensure they are not on a relay team.

## **Learning Responsibility**

At this level of swimming, it is important that the swimmer begins to take on more responsibility for what is happening at meets.

- Arriving at the meet 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time.
- Being aware of what is happening during the meet and getting themselves to the starting blocks on time for their heat.
- Being organized and prepared – knowing where their racing goggles and cap are.
- Reporting to the coach before a race if uncertain about swim and what strategy to use.
- Reporting to the coach after each race to talk about how they did and where they want to improve for next time.
- Packing nutritious snacks and water to keep up energy levels.
- Encourage swimmers to be responsible for packing their competition bags for the meets. Parents can facilitate this by providing the swimmer with a list of items that need to go in the bag, but letting the swimmer become responsible for packing it.

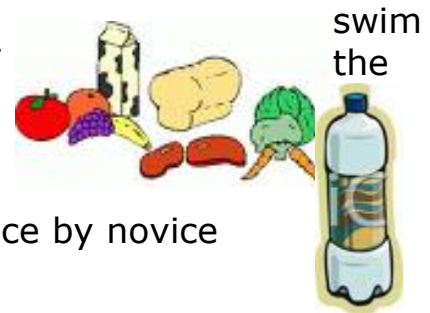
## Expectations at Meets

For all meets, it is important that swimmers arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time. The warm-up time indicates when swimmers can enter the water according to meet management. However, prior to that time the team may have a team meeting with coaches, a team cheer and perform dry land stretching. It is important that swimmers participate in this group experience as it sets the stage for the meet. When traveling to an out-of-town meet, the focus needs to be on the meet and competing. This provides the swimmer with important learning for when they begin to travel with the club and without parents. When at an out-of-town meet swimmers need to eat properly and have brought proper snacks on deck, that they are getting adequate rest, and that they know that the primary focus should be on what is happening at the pool and not on local attractions.



## “Eat Drink and be Ready” (Nutrition and Hydration)

You cant drive a car without fuel .....you cant a race without fuel either. Swimming is one of more demanding sports in terms of energy expenditure. Proper pre-race nutrition and hydration are an important and often underappreciated aspect of athletic performance by novice athletes and their parents.



### Pre-Exercise Nutrition

In general, the functions of a pre-exercise snack are as follows:

- Prevent low blood sugar
- Ensure proper hydration
- Leave the athlete neither hungry nor with undigested food in the stomach
- Provide positive psychological reinforcement that the body is well fueled

## **The characteristics of proper high performance pre-exercise foods are:**

- High in carbohydrate to maximize glycogen stores
- Low in fat and fiber
- Moderate in protein
- Familiar and well tolerated, as determined through experimentation in previous sessions

### **Nutrition: 3-4 hours before**

The general rule is that 3-4 hours are needed for a large meal to digest (obviously, the smaller the meal, the quicker it can be digested). Studies have shown that ingestion of a meal containing 140-330 grams of carbohydrate 3-4 hours before exercise enhances performance. Defining the best amount of pre-exercise food for an individual is difficult because tolerances vary greatly from person to person. Also, the amount of carbohydrate consumed in the pre-exercise meal should be weighed against the total daily amount of calories required by the individual (e.g. someone with a greater energy requirement would choose an amount of pre-exercise carbohydrate at the upper end of this range).

### **60 minutes before**

Individual practice should be based on individual experience, but small snacks that are mostly carbohydrate are probably best. Try to figure out what works best for you. Although it is not necessary to eat during the hour before exercise, neither is it likely to be harmful to performance. If you must eat during this time period (for example, trying to squeeze in a snack before a morning workout) choose a smaller meal of easily digested foods.

### **Eating before morning workout**

Beginning a workout with low blood sugar is likely to lead to early fatigue and underscores the importance of eating before morning swims. As stated in the previous sections, 3-4 hours may be needed

to digest a large carbohydrate meal. If the exercise session is early enough to make waking up 3-4 hours before impractical, a smaller carbohydrate snack can be consumed 30-90 minutes before exercise. It is suitable for the snack to be 200-400 Calories, with the higher end of the range being more appropriate for consumption with more time before the exercise. Additionally, if the individual knows they are likely to eat little or nothing before morning exercise, having a quality high carbohydrate dinner or snack the night before can compensate somewhat.

### **The most important ingredient - WATER!!!**

The daily sweat loss varies but for high-level athletes can range from 1 to 1.5 litres per hour. Depending on the intensity and duration of the workouts, the daily water requirement for athletes ranges from two to six litres per day. Just a 2% drop in body weight due to dehydration can have an overall negative impact on exercise performance. The fact that water is vital for peak bodily function can't be overstated.

The day before an event, drink an extra 3 - 4 glasses of fluid so that you over-hydrate. Such a practice is tolerated well by most people. Up to two hours before the start of an exercise approximately 500 mL of fluid should be consumed. Drink another 250 mL 30 minutes before, then another 250 mL 15 minutes before the exercise begins.

### **Post-Exercise Nutrition**

Proper nutrition is a significant factor in achieving your goals. The contribution to such goals made by nutrition in the period immediately following exercise is absolutely critical. Three important concepts need to be considered when examining any diet plan:

- Timing (i.e. when)
- Nutrient quality (i.e. what kind)
- Nutrient quantity (i.e. how much).

### **Summary**

In summary, carbohydrate and protein will be depleted during exercise. The post swim snack or meal should have carbohydrate as well as protein. Some examples of snacks that fit this criteria are:

- Turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread with 2 tablespoons of low fat mayonnaise and an apple (61 grams carbohydrate; 17 grams protein)
- 1 cup of trail mix (71 grams carbohydrate; 22 grams protein)
- 375 mL of 1% chocolate milk and a banana (67 grams carbohydrate; 13 grams protein)
- Sport type (e.g. Power/Cliff) bar and 1 cup of Gatorade (49 grams carbohydrate; 14 grams protein)

## What You Should Pack For A Swim Meet

Here's a list of items your swimmer's bag should contain for the meet. Be sure to label everything with your swimmer's name - bags, suits, goggles, towels, etc. look alike, especially new meet t-shirts!



- **Team Suit** - Always pack a spare suit (they do fall apart sometimes!). For championship meets, don't forget the champs suit.
- **Team Swim Cap** - Pack two, they tear easily!
- **Team T-Shirt** - To ward off the chill and make you look like a team member.
- **Goggles** - At least two pairs (straps break!). You can also pack extra straps, so favorite goggles can be saved (but, replacement takes time - thus the need for an extra pair). Always alternate two pairs during practice. NEVER wear untested, new goggles at a meet.
- **Deck Sandals** - There's plenty of ways to pick up infection and get injured around the pool. MAKE them wear sandals on EVERY pool deck - inside or outside! Your primary means of propulsion is your feet!
- **Towels** - Pack at least two (big ones). Everything around the pool gets wet!
- **Something Warm to Wear** - Team warm up suit, or Team sweats, or Team fleece jacket; more towels (swimmers like to wrap themselves in towels - it's easy!).
- **Water Bottle** - A big one, with water in it! Or bottles of sports



drink. Swimmers dehydrate easily. They don't realize they are sweating!

- **Vaseline** - To put on shoulders under suit straps (suits are tight and rub). A small container is adequate.
- **Discreet Snacks** (often not allowed on deck) - Raisins, trail mix, granola bars , goldfish, grapes, small chunks of fruit or veggies; favorite dry cereals in *Ziploc* bags; *Power Bars*;
- **Baby Powder** - To lightly dust inside of swim caps after drying them; keeps them from sticking together and makes them easier to put on! (A sample size will last a long time.).
- **Toiletries** - Swim shampoo, conditioner, hairbrush, comb, contact lens solution, girls only stuff, deodorant, and other bathroom stuff.
- **A Dry Change of Clothes** - For after the meet (to remain dry in a swim bag they must be in a separate compartment or *Ziploc* bag!).
- **Inhalers** - If your child is asthmatic, this is the most important thing they own. Different environments have different triggers that can set off an attack. Tell the coach if your child has asthma and where they can find their inhalers! Pack their inhalers! Same for other medications.
- **Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)** For older swimmers, these are good for headaches and body aches.
- **Entertainment Items** - Books (for reading and school work), MP3/CD player (with earphones), CDs, *Gameboys™*, playing cards, etc. There's lots of time between events! You'll be surprised how much homework gets completed at a swim meet.
- **Extra Plastic Bags** - For keeping things dry (various sizes).

**For Travel Meets: Here's a list of items your swim bag should contain:**

- coolers in the pool, but do allow them in off-deck seating areas
- **A Black Sharpie™ Marker** - For marking E/H/L info for each race on your swimmer's hand (E= Event #; H = Heat #; L = Lane#)
- **A Highlighter** - For marking their race info on the heat/program.
- **A Pen** - For writing down the times your swimmer achieves at



the meet.

- **Stopwatch** - To get splits/ times, if there's no scoreboard.
- **Folding Chairs** - To sit in if there are no bleachers.
- **Cooler** - For drinks and snacks (many venues don't allow)
- **Entertainment Items - *For You***. Books, newspaper, playing cards, work items, hobby items, etc. with which to keep busy when your swimmer's not swimming. ....**better yet, volunteer to help with the meet!**

## Parent Involvement - Very Important Stuff!

Organizations generally run with the help of a core of dedicated and committed volunteers and the Bluephins are no exception. The club requires many different parent skill sets to run cost-effectively and efficiently. This ranges from hospitality, travel planning and organization, IT, fund-raising, and meet hosting duties to name a few. For club hosted meets there is an expectation that parents will assist in officiating. Swim meets require very large numbers of officials. We are in fact the most officiated sport and a meet session requires upwards of 50 volunteer officials. Without officials, we cannot run meets. The club will hold a number of officials training sessions ranging from entry level skills (e.g. timing) to more senior positions.



Take an opportunity to talk to the coach, board members and other parents to get a better understanding of officiating and other volunteer expectations. We can only build a good program and a strong club if parents get involved. It is generally a lot more interesting to be involved on deck than to be sitting up in the stands. It is also a lot cooler and you have the best seat in the house. But most importantly your children will REALLY appreciate your involvement and interest in their sport.

## Financial Obligations

The sport of swimming like all sports does require a financial commitment. Unlike most sports, swimming has a 10-month season and so while at first glance swimming may seem expensive, it really is comparable to many other sports on a month to month basis. Fees vary depending on the level of involvement of the swimmer and the number of meets they attend.



No swimmer is a registered member unless all fees have first been paid. All payments must be made by cheque, payable to Charlottetown Bluephins Aquatic Club. Below are the fees associated with swimming with the Charlottetown Bluephins this season. This year we are providing a breakdown of the club fees and Swim PEI fees. Swim PEI Provincial fees are determined by Swim PEI and Swimming Canada. This fee covers swimmer insurance, provincial administrative costs, coaching and officials training as well as funding for provincial and national programs for swimmer assistance. These costs vary dependant on your swimmers age. In the past the Swim PEI fee was included in your membership fees. Due to the increasing cost of insurance we have separated these items to better clarify the costs. A detailed explanation of the fees this year and the process for paying them are included on a separate document. **Please note that this year all fees will be paid via checks and can be paid in full at the start of the season or in installments as outlined at the beginning of each season.**

In addition to club swim fees, we will be providing an estimate of the swim meet fees for your swimmer this year. This is only an estimate based on an anticipated of the number of meets each that the typical swimmer in each group will attend this year. This will be collected at registration in the form of post-dated cheques to be cashed as required to cover meet fees. The meet fee breakdown for each group will be outlined at the beginning of each season.

There are **3 different fees** payable:

**1. SWIM PEI/SWIM CANADA (SNC) FEE:** The amount of the cheque will depend upon the age group of the swimmer. If there is more than one swimmer in a family, you may provide a cheque for each swimmer or a single cheque to cover the SNC Fees for all swimmers.

**2. SWIM MEET FEES:** These fees are an estimate of the each swimmer's meet entry fees and coaching expenses. Cheques for meet fees will only be deposited into the swimmer's account as expenses are incurred for participation in swim meets. If a swimmer does not enter any meets, then the cheques will not be cashed. Any money remaining in the meet fees account at the end of the season will be refunded

If there is more than 1 swimmer in a family, payment for all swimmers may be combined for each interval.

**Please note that "team meets" are not included in this estimate.** A team meet is defined as an out of town event where the swimmers travel and stay together as a group under the supervision of the coach(s) and chaperones . Parents will be advised well in advance of any such meet and the anticipated associated expenses.

**3. MEMBERSHIP FEES:** These are the monthly fees you will pay which cover the cost of running the team throughout the including pool rental, coaches honoraria , equipment and other administrative costs. You may opt to pay in full at the start of the season or through a series of monthly post dated cheques. These costs will be provided on the website and through email to all families before the start of the season.

If there is more than one swimmer in a family, interval payments for all swimmers maybe combined. Alternatively, a separate series of cheques for each swimmer may be submitted.

## **The Equipment: What you really *MUST* have!**



### **First things first! What “suits” you best?**

Below is an explanation of the three swim suits the Bluephins will use this season. The number one thing to remember is to choose the right suit for you. As your level of competition increases so should your swimsuit. The team equipment manager and coaches will assist swimmers and their parents with sizing and suit selection and will place orders for suits at several times throughout the year through our supplier Team Aquatics Supplies.

#### **Speedo Endurance® Team Suit**

This suit is the best option for the majority of the swimmers on the Bluephins. It will be club branded and come in a solid blue colour. While it does not have any performance enhancing qualities it does have the following benefits;

- Designed to last longer with 100% Chlorine Resistant fabric
- Quick drying and engineered to retain its shape. (...won't get baggy!)
- Will retain its colour 20x better than conventional fabrics

This suit is recommended for swimmers buying only one suit to train and race.

#### **Speedo Aquablade® Racing Suit**

This suit is the industry standard for racing suits since 1996. Designed to be only used during competition, it does not have the same fabric

benefits as the Speedo Endurance suit. This suit should not be used during practice as it will lose its shape and colour quickly. It does have the following benefits;

- Reduces drag in the water (small ridges simulate a sharks skin)
- Tighter fit to promote streamlined body form

This suit is recommended for swimmers buying one suit to train and another to race. Swimmers attaining an East Coast qualifying standard (what is this? Explanation coming soon to another part of the website) should consider racing in this suit at performance meets.

### **Speedo Fastskin® Racing Suit**

The Fastskin® has been around since the 2000 Olympics. It has undergone several changes over the years to get where we are now. Like the Aquablade® this suit is designed for racing. It should never be used during practice sessions. The benefits of this suit are;

- i) Lighter and water repellant fabric
- ii) Even more reduction in drag with a superior fit
- iii) Compresses body offering stability, power transfer and less muscle wiggle

This suit is recommended for swimmers buying two suits to race and one suit to train. Swimmers attaining a National Standard (what is this? Explanation coming soon to another part of the website) should consider buying this suit to race during their performance meets and race in the Aquablade® during other meets.

There are of course lots of styles and manufacturers so if you have questions about a particular suit ask your coach or the equipment manager!

### **Keeping Your Suit in Good Condition**

Suits should be rinsed in water after use when possible. Aquablade® and Fastskin® suits should never be rung out ...let them dry naturally. The worst location for a suit to dry is in your swim bag ...hang them up!!

## All the other Gear!

**Each year the team will provide all team members with a team tee shirt and team swim cap at no charge. Swimmers will be sized early in the year and shirts will be available in October.**

Caps: Latex swim caps are used during a race and/or practice, to cut down water resistance and to protect swimmers' hair from the effects of chemicals. They are also a great place to display the team logo. Some swimmers also use silicone caps as well. They cost more and don't fit as tightly so swimmers don't generally wear them in competition but they are more durable and last much longer so are great as a practice cap.

Fins: flippers worn on the feet, used for stroke technique and speed-assisted training.



Hand Paddles: used for technique training (feel of water on hands during different stroke drills)



Kickboard: a device usually made of plastic, used to work the kick portion of a stroke.

Pull buoy: usually made of durable foam, this device is placed between the legs to isolate the use of the arms. The pull buoy is used to strengthen the arms and is sometimes used for stroke work.



Track suit: some type of warm-up or sweat suit should be worn at meets.

Towel: A minimum of two of towels is recommended for meets. Many swimmers also use smaller chamois type towels which are light and super absorbent.

Team uniform: a team uniform is generally made up of the following: suit, cap, T-shirt, sweat suit. Each club has branded gear, which is usually a requirement and is unique to the team.



# **Your Role as a Swimming Parent**

## **The 10 Commandments for Swimming Parents**



1. Do not impose your ambition on your child.
2. Be supportive no matter what.
3. Do not coach your child.
4. Only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.
5. Acknowledge your child's fears.
6. Do not criticize the officials.
7. Respect your child's coach.
8. Be loyal and supportive of the team.
9. Your child shall have goals besides winning.
10. Do not expect your child to become an Olympian. It only happens for 0.02% of competitive swimmers.



# How To Be A Great Swim Parent!



Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes. They develop self-discipline, good sportsmanship and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to deal with defeat, while becoming healthy and physically fit.

As a swimmer's parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, and by coming to meets.

Parents are not participants on their children's teams, but contribute to the success experienced by the youngsters and their teams. Parents serve as role models and their children often emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates.

## **Be enthusiastic and supportive!**

Remember that your children are the swimmers. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals.

Do not overburden your children with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of children's swimming experience is that they learn about themselves, while enjoying the sport. This healthy environment encourages learning and having fun, which will develop a positive self-image within each child.





## Let the COACH coach!

The coach is the one best qualified to judge a swimmer's performance and technique. Your role is to provide support. The best way to help children achieve their goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one, remember that this is a learning experience. Encourage all efforts, and point out the things done well. As long as the best effort was given, you should make the child feel like a winner. Swimming is a technical sport and disqualifications are used to ensure proper technique is followed.



**Avoid criticism of the coach in front of your swimmer.** The role of the coach is to provide a progressive training situation in which your swimmer can develop his/her skills and speed. Placing the obstacle of criticism between coach and swimmer creates an additional pressure on the swimmer, which can further impair performances. Your swimmer needs to trust his/her coach in order to get the most benefit from him or her. Your best bet if you don't like what the coach is doing is to make an appointment with him or her to discuss the situation. If you feel unable to talk with the coach, then perhaps you should consider a different approach.



## Are YOU A Pressure Parent?

The following survey has been taken from the Amateur Swimming Association of Great Britain. If you answer "yes" to one or more of these questions, you may be in danger of pressuring your child. It is important to remember that the parent's role is critical, and should be supportive at all times to ensure a positive experience for your child.



- **Do you want your child to win more than he does?**
- Do you openly show your disappointment if she has a poor result?
- Do you feel that you have to "psych" him up right before a competition?
- Do you feel that your child can only enjoy the sport if she wins?
- Do you regularly conduct "post mortems" immediately following a competition or training session?
- Do you feel that you have to force your child to go to training?
- Do you find yourself wanting to interfere during training or competitions, thinking that you could do better?
- Do you find yourself disliking your child's opponents?
- Are your child's goals more important to **you** than they are to him?
- Do you provide material rewards (e.g., money, toys) for good performances?



# The Swimmer's Bill of Rights

## A Swimmer should have:

- **The right of opportunity to participate in sports, regardless of ability, gender, or ethnicity.**
- The right to have qualified adult leadership.
- The right to participate in a safe and healthy environment.
- The right to play as a child as opposed to as an adult.
- The right to proper preparation for participation in the sport.
- The right to be treated with dignity by all involved.
- The right to equal opportunity in striving for success.
- The right to have fun through sport.





# **Bluephins Code of Conduct**

The Charlottetown Bluephins Aquatic Club has established a Code of Conduct for its swimmers, coaches and parents. This Code takes on the format of Rights and Responsibilities. Please take this opportunity to review this with your swimmer.

## **Our Mission Statement**

The Charlottetown Bluephins Aquatic Club is committed to inspire every person in its organization by providing opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, and values necessary for each individual to become a capable, concerned participant in the sport of competitive swimming.

## **Behavioural Expectations**

Appropriate behaviour allows everyone the right to learn, to be safe, and to be treated with respect, courtesy, and consideration. Consequently, appropriate behaviour within the Charlottetown Bluephins Aquatic Club is mandatory.

Each person is responsible for his/her behaviour and is capable of making appropriate choices. It is therefore the responsibility of coaches, parents, and others to encourage and enforce appropriate behavior and good decision-making.



# **Swimmer Code Of Conduct**

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Swimmers have the right to:**

- Be treated with respect and consideration
- Feel safe in a caring environment
- A high-quality swim program that takes into account their individual strengths and needs
- Express their ideas and opinions respectfully

### **Responsibilities of Swimmers**

- Be on time at each practice and/or at scheduled swim meet departure time and bring required equipment—goggles, bathing suit, bathing cap;
- Inform the coach when you cannot attend practice and/or swim meet;
- Inform the coach of any pertinent medical conditions or concerns;
- Inform the head coach in a timely manner of your intention to attend or not upcoming swim meets;
- Respect Bluephins coach(es), other team members, Team Managers and parents, building staff and property;
- When traveling and at meets, respect other clubs' team members and their coach(es). Swimmers are expected to remain with the Team on deck at all meets;
- When traveling and at meets, act as a representative of the Bluephins;
- Relay to your parents any information received from the coach and/or Team Manager in a timely manner;
- At all times, remember that you are part of a team. Treat each other as teammates and be supportive of each other.



# **Parent Code Of Conduct**

## **Parents have the right to:**

- Be treated with respect and consideration
- Be informed of their child's progress and be notified of any behavior concerns
- Have their child swim in a safe, friendly environment that builds self-esteem and a sense of belonging

## **Responsibilities of Parents**

- Ensure swimmers are at practice on time;
- Inform coaches of any illness or injury and pertinent medical information; and ensure the swimmer and coach have access to any required medication;
- Promptly pay fees at the time they are due;
- Inform the Executive/Fund raising committee of intention to participate or not in any fund raising activities;
- Attend general meetings;
- Promptly inform the team manager of their swimmers intention to attend or not any planned swim meet prior to the designated deadline date. Once this commitment is made, meet entries are sent to the host club and entry fees are forwarded by the Treasurer on behalf of the Club. Because meet fees are paid on the swimmer's behalf prior to the start of the meet, meet fees are due and payable to the Bluephins regardless of actual attendance. Meet fees and expenses are due and charged to the swimmers account by the dates outlined in the meet schedule. Parents will promptly pay these fees;
- Of all sports, swimming is the sport requiring the most officials to run competitions. Swim meets do not happen without the support of parent volunteers. Each parent is expected to take a turn in on-deck participation at Bluephins hosted meets. The Club will provide training in such activities as timing, stroke and turn judges, starters, etc. Parents are required to adhere to the rules of any host Club when attending meets, and abide by all policies and procedures of the Club.



# **Coach Code Of Conduct**

The athlete/coach relationship is a privileged one. Coaches play a critical role in the personal as well as athletic development of their athletes. They must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it. Coaches must also recognize that they are conduits through which the values and goals of a sport organization are channelled. Thus, how athletes regard their sport is often dependent on the behaviour of the coach. The following Code of Conduct has been developed to aid coaches in achieving a level of behaviour that will allow them to assist their athletes in becoming well-rounded, self-confident and productive human beings.

## **Coach Responsibilities**

### **Coaches have a responsibility to:**

- treat everyone fairly within the context of their activity, regardless of gender, place of origin, colour, sexual orientation, religion, political belief or economic status;
- direct comments or criticism at the performance rather than the athlete;
- consistently display high personal standards and project a favourable image of their sport and of coaching. For example, coaches should:
  - refrain from public criticism of fellow coaches, especially when speaking to the media or recruiting athletes,
  - abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages when working with athletes,
  - refrain from the use of profane, insulting, harassing or otherwise offensive language in the conduct of their duties;
  - ensure that the activity being undertaken is suitable for the age, experience, ability and fitness level of the athletes and educate athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment;



- communicate and cooperate with registered medical practitioners in the management of their athletes' medical problems. Consider the athletes' future health and well being as foremost when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue playing or training;
- recognize and accept when to refer athletes to other coaches or sport specialists. Allow athletes' goals to take precedence over their own.
- regularly seek ways of increasing professional development and self-awareness;
- treat opponents and officials with due respect, both in victory and defeat and encourage athletes to act accordingly;
- Actively encourage athletes to uphold the rules of their sport and the spirit of such rules;
- Be aware of the academic pressures placed on student-athletes and conduct practices and competitions in a manner so as to support academic success.

## **Coaching Imperatives**

Coaches must:

1. ensure the safety of the athletes with whom they work;
2. At no time become intimately and/or sexually involved with their athletes.
3. Respect their athletes' dignity. Verbal or physical behaviours that constitute harassment or abuse are unacceptable.
4. Never advocate or condone the use of drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances.







# A Glossary of Swimming Terms

**Age Group Swimming:** This is the program through which SNC provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are 11-12, 13-14, 15-17, and Senior. Local meets may also include events for 10 & under swimmers.

**Block:** The starting platform



**Bulkhead:** A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50 m pool into two 25 m pools.

**Circle Swimming:** Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

**Coach:** A person who trains and teaches athletes in the sport of swimming.

**Cut:** Slang for qualifying time. The time standard which a swimmer must reach in order to attend a particular meet or event.

**Distance Event:** Term used to refer to events over 400 metres.

**DQ (Disqualified):** This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind (e.g. one-handed touch in breaststroke). A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive an award, nor is there an official time in that event.

**Drill:** An exercise involving a part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

**Dry-land Training:** Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics, and/or weight training.



**Entry From:** Form used by the coach to enter swimmers in a competition.

**False Start:** Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start prior to the signal.

**Final:** The championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight swimmers from the preliminaries compete for awards, depending on the number of lanes in the pool.

**Finish:** The final phase of the race — the touch at the end of the race.

**FINA:** Federation Internationale de Natation de Amateur, the international governing body of competitive swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swimming.

**Flags:** Backstroke flags placed 5 metres from the end of the pool. They enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently through being able to count the number of strokes into each wall.

**Goal:** A specific time achievement a swimmer sets and strives for; can be short- or long-term.

**Gutter:** the area at the edges of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated into the pool. Deep gutters catch surface wave and don't allow them to wash back into the pool and affect the race.

**IM:** Abbreviation of individual medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

**Lap Counter:** A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. The person who counts for the swimmer is stationed at the opposite end from the start.

**Lane ropes:** the dividers for the individual lanes. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable, which rotates on the cable when hit by a wave. The rotating disks dissipate surface tension waves in a competitive pool allowing for flat water and faster swimming.

**Long Course:** a pool configured for swimming with a 50 meter long racing course. World records may be set in long course and short course competition. The main Canadian Long Course season is from mid March to August. Championship meets are conducted at the end of the long course season including Regionals, Provincials and Nationals. The Olympic Games as well as all major international competitions are conducted long course.

**Long Distance:** Any freestyle event over 1500 metres, normally conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or ocean.

**Meet:** Competition designed to be a measure of progress and a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmers test themselves against the clock to see how they are progressing.

**Middle Distance:** Term used to refer to events of 200 to 400 metres in length.

**Negative Split:** Swimming the second half of the race faster than the first half.

**Official:** A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces SNC rules.

**Official Time:** A time achieved in a race during a duly sanctioned competition.

**Pace:** The often predetermined speed with which a swimmer completes each segment of a race (e.g., 25 m, 50 m).

**Pace Clock:** Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice (may also be digital).

**Prelim:** Abbreviation for preliminaries, also called heats — those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

**Q-T:** Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

**Relay exchange:** the exchange between the swimmer in the water and the next swimmer on the relay team. A perfect exchange will simultaneously have the finishing swimmer's hand on the touch pad and the starting swimmer's feet just touching the starting block with the rest of the starting swimmer's body extended over the water.

**Relay:** An event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve on time.

**Safety Procedure:** Safety procedures are designed to prevent accidents, and must be followed to the letter.

**Sanctioned Meet:** All competitions in which records may be set and official times may be obtained, must be sanctioned (approved officially) by a Swim PEI Sanctioning Officer.

**Scratch:** To withdraw from an event in a competition.

**Senior Swimming:** The program through which SNC provide fair and open competition in provincial and/or national swimming championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a pool of talented athletes for national and international competition. There are no age restrictions on senior competitions.

**Short Course or SC:** Refers to events held in a pool 25 metres in length. Most competitions held during the winter are short course.

**Split:** A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 m and are used to determine if a swimmer is on a planned pace. Under certain conditions, initial splits may also be used as official times.

**Sprint:** Describes the shorter events (50 and 100 m); in training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

**Streamline:** The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight and straight as it can be.

**SNC:** Swimming/Natation Canada, the national governing body of competitive swimming.

**PARA Swimming:** Swimming for swimmers with a locomotor or cognitive disability. Para swimmers usually compete alongside able bodies swimmers in local meets

**Taper:** The final preparation phase. As part of this phase, and prior to major competitions, older and more experienced swimmers will decrease their amount of practice time to allow their bodies to rest and recover from hard training. They may also shave their entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water.

**Time Card:** The card issued to each swimmer prior to each race, on which splits and the final time are recorded. Most meets today are "cardless" meaning the results are recorded electronically and on the timers' sheets only.

**Time Trial:** A practice race which is not part of regular competitions. Time trials may be sanctioned and used to qualify for specific meets.

**Touch:** the finish of the race.

**Touch Pad:** A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

**Turnover:** the number of times a swimmer's arms turn over (cycle) in a given distance or time during a race.

**Warm-down:** Low-intensity swimming used by swimmer after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

**Warm-up:** Low-intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or a race to get muscles loose and warm, and to gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

**Watches:** Stopwatches used to time swimmers during a competition. When totally electronic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a

back-up method.

## The Officials

Officials are present at all competitions to implement the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass written tests, and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating. If you are interested, contact your club's officials' chairperson.



**Timekeepers:** operate timing devices (stopwatches or automatic timing equipment) and record the official time for each swimmer in their lane.

**Turn judges** observe from each end of the pool and ensure that the turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.

**Stroke Judges:** observe from both sides of the pool, walking abreast of the swimmers, to ensure that the rules relating to each stroke are being followed.

**Relay Take-off Judges:** stand beside the starting blocks to observe the relay exchanges, ensuring that the feet of the departing swimmer have not lost contact with the block before the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.

**The Clerk of Course:** arranges the swimmers into their proper heats and lanes.

**The Starter:** assumes control of the swimmers from the Referee, directs them to take their mark, and sees that no swimmer is in motion prior to giving the start signal.

**The Referee:** has overall authority and control of the competition,

ensuring that all the rules are followed; assigns and instructs all officials and decides all questions relating to the conduct of the meet.

Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee, and the rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmers or their coaches of the reasons for any disqualifications.

### **THE "DQ"**

If your child is disqualified (DQ'd) in an event, be supportive rather than critical. For newer swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke need to be corrected. It should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in school work: it points out areas which need further practice. Every swimmer has had a few!

The disqualification is necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all other competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, the coach, and the parent can also keep it a positive experience for the disqualified swimmer.

# **The Governing Bodies**

## **Swimming/Natation Canada**



Swimming Canada (SNC) is our national sport organization, and its mission statement reads as follows: "to provide opportunities for every individual in the sport of swimming to reach his or her maximum potential in fitness and excellence."

SNC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and its professional staff carries out its policies.

## **Swimming PEI**



Swim PEI is the provincial sport governing body directly affiliated with Swimming Canada, and our athletes are also registered with this organization to allow them to compete in sanctioned swimming events not only on the local level, but also nationally and internationally. Swim PEI provides support to member teams through its technical as well as administrative programs. It also facilitates high performance swimming through a financial support program to high level athletes.



# The Finish Touch

We hope this manual has provided you with a helpful introduction to the world of competitive swimming. There is undoubtedly much more that you will learn along the way. Enjoy your swimmers growth and development. Get involved. You might even have a little fun yourself while you're at it.



***The Bluephins have always prided themselves in producing well-rounded individuals and if we also produce a few great swimmers in the process that's a bonus!***