

Your Role as Swimming Parents:

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 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 child's team, but obviously contribute greatly to the success experienced by the child and his team. 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 child is the swimmer. 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 over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of your child's swimming experience is that they learn about themselves while enjoying the sport. This healthy environment encourages learning and fun, which will develop a positive self-image within your child.

Let the Coach, Coach

The best way to help a child achieve their goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make mistakes. If your child swims poorly or struggles, remember that they are still learning. Encourage their efforts and point out the positive aspects of their swimming, things they did well. As long as they gave their best effort, you should make them feel like a winner.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A PARENT

Get Your Child 'There' on Time

As in all sports there are many events that your child must attend, practices, team meetings, competitions, special events, etc. The coach wants your child to enjoy the experiences of swimming as much as possible. The coach also has a responsibility to look after the team as a whole. Start times are very important to get the most use out of pool time, ensure arrival commitments are made and events generally go as planned. Late or inconsiderate members hurt everyone. If your child is going to be late or miss, let someone know.

Become Involved

This does not mean you have to run for President your first year, but try and get involved in some aspect of the club. The easiest position is to sign up to be an official at the first swim meet. You get to enjoy the competition, meet other parents, and watch your child participate. Officiating can be fun and you can progress through the levels at a similar rate as your child. Very few other sports provide this opportunity.

It is important that you try to attend your club's monthly meetings and especially the Annual General Meeting. You certainly do not need to run for office, but you should be aware of the club's business affairs. You also may have an expertise that the club could tap into for assistance.

In this era of economically trying times, the cost of swimming is becoming progressively more difficult to deal with. It is imperative that parents pitch in to assist the club with all fund raising and cost effective measures. The phrase "Many hands make light the load" is one that truly describes the approach you should have towards the task of running a swim club.

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 parents' 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/she does?
- Do you show your disappointment if he/she has a poor result?
- Do you feel that you have to "psyche" your child up before a competition?
- Do you feel that your child can enjoy the sport only if he/she wins?
- Do you conduct a "post mortem" immediately after competition?
- Do you feel that you have to force your child to go to training?
- Do you find yourself wanting to interfere during training or competition thinking that you could do better?
- Do you find yourself disliking your child's opponents?

Copied from Swim BC Swim Guide

GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

Block(s): The starting platform.

Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-meter courses.

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.

Code of Conduct: An agreement signed by a swimmer prior to travel stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

Cut: Slang for qualifying standard. A minimum time necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

Distance: Term used to refer to events over 400 meters.

DQ/Disqualified: This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind; e.g. freestyle kick in butterfly. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time.

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

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

Entry Form: Form on which a swimmer is entered for a competition. Typically requests the swimmers registration number, sex, event number and entry time. Usually completed by the coach or Team Manager.

False start: Occurs when a swimmer moves prior to the sounding of the start command.

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

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

Flags: Backstroke flags placed 5 meters from the end of the pool. They enable backstroke swimmers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently by counting their strokes.

Goal: A specific time or skill achievement a swimmer sets and strives for.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows and is re-circulated through the filtration system.

I.M.: Shorthand for Individual Medley. An event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

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

Long Course: A pool 50 meters in length. Swim Ontario conducts most of its spring and summer competition in long course.

Long Distance: Any freestyle event over 1500 meters, normally conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or ocean. Also known as Marathon Swimming. FINA sanctioned events are any event up to 25 kilometers in distance.

Meet: A competitive opportunity organized to bring swimmers of a similar competitive ability together. Implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmers test themselves against the clock and competition to see how they are improving.

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

National Championship: Often referred to as senior championships in which Canada's top swimmers compete. A qualifying standard must be achieved but there is no age restriction.

National Age Group Championship: A national competition held once a year open to swimmers aged 18&U. A qualifying standard must be achieved.

Negative Split: Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

Official: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces Swim Ont., SNC and FINA rules. There will be stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

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.

Prelims: Slang for preliminaries, also called Heats or Trials. Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

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

Relay: An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event in a competition.

Senior Swimming: The program through which SNC provides fair and open competition at SNC designated meets and Senior National 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 International Competition. There are no age restrictions on Senior competitions.

Short Course: A pool 25 meters in length. Swim Ont. conducts most of its winter competition in short course.

Split: A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is "on pace". Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times. In a relay, a split time describes the time for one of the four individuals.

Sprint: Describes the shorter events (50 and 100). 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 elongated as it can be.

Taper: The final preparation phase for a peak meet. A typical taper phase will involve reducing training volume and increasing training intensity. Rest is also critical at this phase. Prior to a major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer will shave their entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water. Called "shaving down", this advanced technique for race preparation is designed to reduce all possible drag effects.

Time Trial: A time-only swim which is not part of a regular meet.

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

Warm down (Swim down): Low intensity swimming used by swimmers 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 swimmer prior to a main practice or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

Watches: Stopwatches used to time swimmers during a competition, usually electronic. When totally automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method

