

# Swim Alberta Provincial Competitions Updates

2024-2025 Swimming Season

Swim Alberta is excited to announce updates and changes to the provincial competitions for the upcoming 2024-2025 swimming season. These changes are based on both feedback and a gap analysis with input from the swimming community to provide a better experience and appropriate competitions for athletes of all ages and skill levels. The primary purpose of these updates is to provide swimmers an appropriate provincial competition opportunity with incremental stepping stones that support both swimmer retention and development.

## New Format Highlights

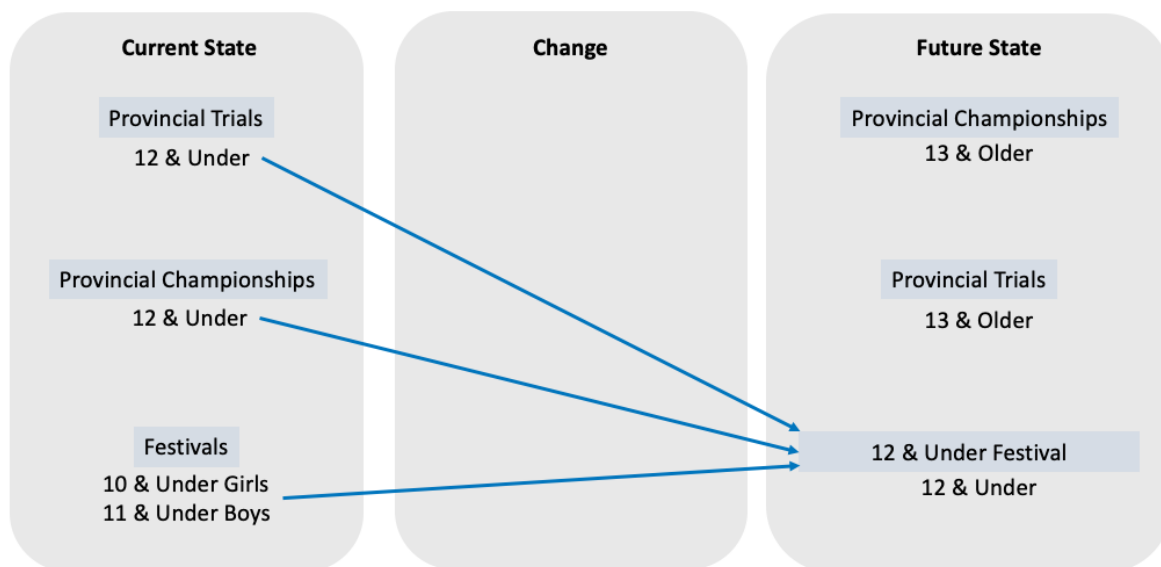
1. Single Year Racing for All Provincial Competitions
2. Shift to a Single 12 & Under Festival, Combining Swimmers from North and South
3. Return of Provincial Trials Competition in the Summer

## Single Age Racing

All provincial competitions will now offer single age racing. Single age racing will be provided in different formats, depending on the event, age and stage of the swimmers participating in the competition. In addition to providing incremental stepping stones for qualification and age-appropriate racing at the developmental stages, this step addresses the feedback and desire for a smoother transition from age group to senior swimming.

## Festivals

One of the key updates to the provincial competitions is the introduction of a single 12 & under Festival, combining swimmers from the north and south, offering more heats and finals events than the current festival format.

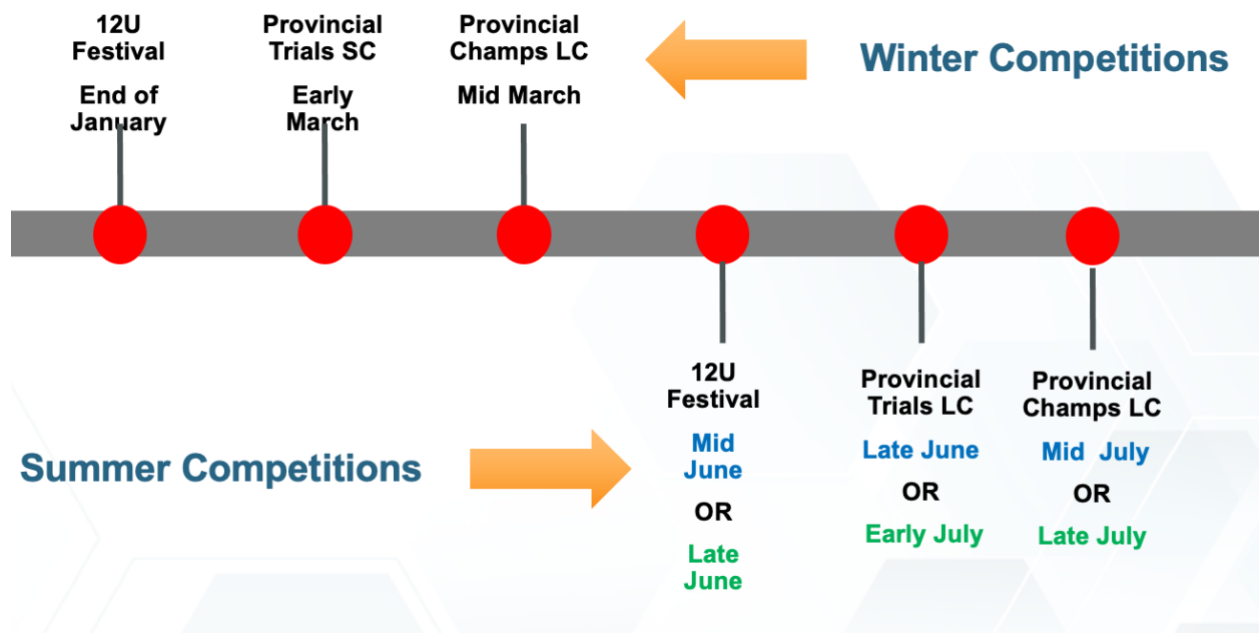


This change aims to provide a more developmentally appropriate and exciting experience for Alberta’s young swimmers, allowing them to showcase their skills and compete against their peers, in a format targeted to the needs of swimmers at this age.

The competition dates for the Winter and Summer Festivals will remain the same, ensuring consistency and allowing coaches to plan their training and competition schedules accordingly.

### Provincial Trials and Championships

Another significant update is the modification of the Provincial Trials and Provincial Championships. In March, the Provincial Trials and Championships will remain on similar dates as prior seasons. However, Swim Alberta will return to providing a Summer Provincial Trials, followed by the Summer Provincial Championships, offering event winners and new qualifiers the opportunity to compete in both events. This change addresses the feedback received regarding the lack of Provincial Trials in the summer.



The dates of the summer events are in the process of being finalized.

### Key Feedback

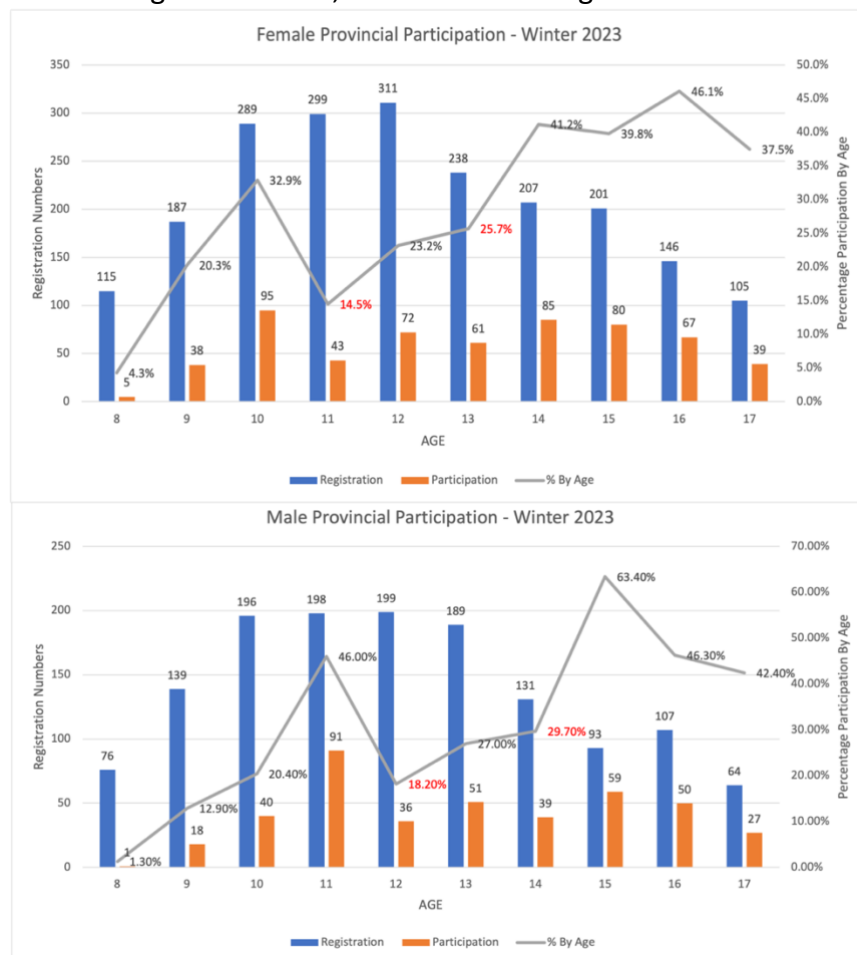
Swim Alberta collected membership feedback through surveys, working groups, and coach feedback, which helped shape these updates. Some key feedback included:

- Jump from Festivals to Provincial Trials: Coaches identified the need for a smoother transition from the Festivals to the Provincial Trials.
- Transition from age group to senior swimming: The membership highlighted the importance of an updated transition from age group to senior swimming.

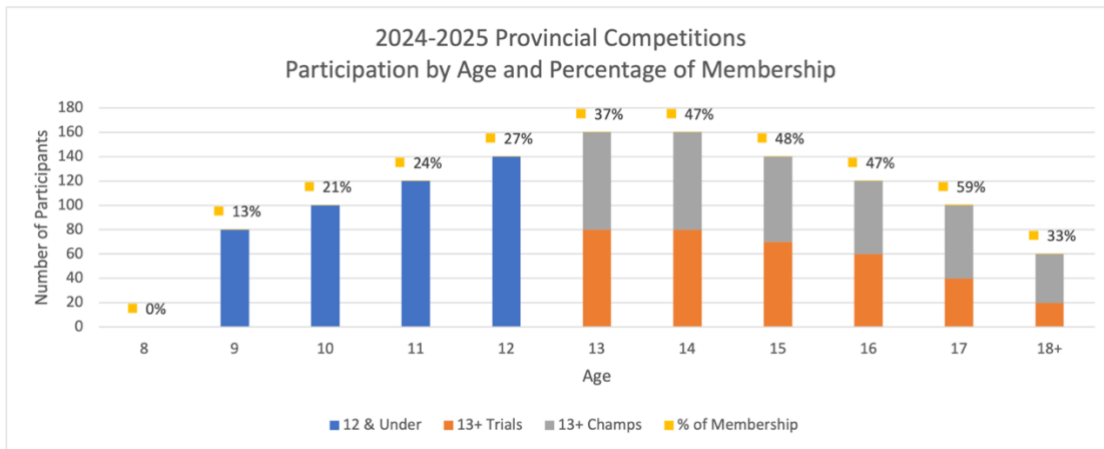
- Lack of Provincial Trials in the Summer: The membership outlined the desire for a provincial season end and/or a chance to qualify for the Provincial Championships.
- Different qualification format confusion: The difference between the spring and summer formats was seen as confusing, the membership sought clarity and consistency.
- Qualification by rank confusion: The Top 20 ranking system for qualification is not well understood, coaches and parents both desired a time standard process.
- End of season timing: Families and coaches of younger swimmers felt that the end of the season was too late, impacting their motivation and development.
- Incremental steps for swimmer development: Coaches emphasized the need for incremental steps and a more gradual progression to support swimmer development.
- Variety of competition opportunities: Coaches highlighted the value of attending a variety of competition opportunities through a swimmers career, rather than attending the same competition for too many swimming seasons.

## Gaps Identified

Swim Alberta's Competition Calendar Working Group reviewed all membership feedback received and provided additional club and coach feedback. This process identified specific gaps in participation at the provincial level for certain age groups. Specifically, a significant gap in participation for females aged 11 and 13, as well as males aged 12 and 14.



To address this gap, Swim Alberta will introduce single age racing at all provincial competitions. Research supports the benefits of single-age participation opportunities, as it aligns with the growth and development of swimmers.



In the past, Swim Alberta offered single-year qualification while racing in two-year age groups, which was uneven and unfair for the participants at these competitions. Swim Alberta believes single age qualification and racing is a necessary step to provide a more development-focused competition experience.

## Mitigating Strategies

To address the gaps and feedback received, Swim Alberta has implemented several mitigating strategies for the 2024-2025 swimming season:

1. Single age racing at all provincial competitions: This change ensures that swimmers compete against athletes their own age, providing a more level playing field for all participants.
2. Transition to senior swimming: To support the transition from age group to senior swimming, Swim Alberta will introduce single-age categories up to age 16 and an "open" category at the Provincial Championships. This will provide the opportunity for athletes to challenge themselves and prepare for the next level of competition when they are ready.
3. An earlier season end for 12 & under swimmers: Swim Alberta recognizes the need to adjust the end of season earlier for this age group. By doing so, younger athletes can maintain their motivation and focus throughout the season.
4. Scaling of the 12 & under competition: The format of the 12 & under competition will offer events and timing based on age, allowing for a more appropriate and developmentally aligned event for each age group. For example, a 10-year-old may have a shorter event schedule than a 12-year-old.
5. New qualifying times: Swim Alberta will create new qualifying times to align with the single year racing, for all competitions. This will ensure that swimmers have progressive incremental goals and targets to strive for each season through their swimming career.



These mitigating strategies aim to address the gaps identified and provide a progressive, and development-focused competition structure for all swimmers in Alberta.

## **Conclusion**

Swim Alberta is committed to creating the best possible competition experience for swimmers in the province. The updates and changes to the provincial competitions for the 2024-2025 swimming season reflect the valuable feedback received from the membership and the continued contributions of the Competition Calendar Working Group. By implementing these changes, Swim Alberta aims to foster athlete development, provide clear pathways for progression, support swimmer retention, and ensure a fair and exciting competition environment for all participants.