

# Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club

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PARENT HANDBOOK



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Welcome to the [Norfolk Hammerhead Aquatic Club](#) or, as we like to call ourselves, the Hammerheads. NHAC, short for the Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club, was founded in 1995 and grew out of the old Simcoe Hammerheads Swim Team, a team that has swimming in Norfolk since the 1920s. We are a competitive swim team that offers high quality professional coaching and technique instruction for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The goal of our team is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability, from novice to international competitor. All our coaches have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport. They provide assurances that the time children spend in swimming will be quality time.

## Board of Directors for the 2024-2025 Season

We are a not-for-profit club, run by its elected Board of Directors which meets on a regular basis. Board members are elected on an annual basis at the team's Annual General Meeting, which is held in May of each year. The executive is made up of primarily parents/guardians who donate their time to ensure that the club operates effectively and in the best interests of our swimmers. All members are welcome at each meeting and encouraged to be involved in team activities and fundraisers.

### Board Positions

Position	Directors
President	Jenn Prouse
Vice President	Crystal Brandon
Secretary	Lysa Wilson
Treasurer	Tricia Atkinson
Registrar	Rachel Riddle
Director of HR and Ethics	Vacant
Apparel Co-ordinator	Nicole McCrea

### Non-Board Positions

Position	Manager/Coordinator
Fundraising Manager	Crystal Brandon
Sponsorship Manager	Jessica Sarrison
Club Officials Chair	Brian Haum
Meet Manager	Mike Godelie



## NHAC Protocols

The Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club is guided by a set of Policies and Procedures that adhere to those of our governing bodies, Swim Ontario, and Swimming Canada. Our policies and procedures are not a set of rules but a set of guidelines that help us to govern our organization in way that is fair, equitable and transparent. The following pages outline some of the key protocols of our club.

### Program Fees, Meet Fees, and Refund Policy

#### Program Fees

NHAC is a privately-run non-profit program. Membership dues contribute to the cost of coaching, facility rentals in addition to in-house and Aqua 7 meet fees. Fundraising is a necessary part of any organization. The funds raised go into the NHAC Swim Team account and pay for such things as Coach's training, advertising, as well as a host of other expenses such as coaching fees. Additional fees, such as the Swim Ontario swimmer registration dues, Shark-fest (if applicable), apparel, and swim meet fees are separate.

Program fees must be paid in full according to the payment schedule that was agreed upon at the time of registration. There is zero tolerance for unpaid or late payments for program and meet fees. Meet fees are due at the beginning of the next monthly billing cycle. Failure to make scheduled payments within 30 days of being due will result in your swimmer not being entered in subsequent meets and the possibility that your swimmer will be removed from future practices until payments are made in full. Fees that are unpaid for more than 60 days will be sent to a collection agency. We understand that there are special circumstances and welcome individuals with concerns to speak with our team's Treasurer to establish a mutually acceptable solution.

#### Meet Fees

The cost of in-house, Developmental (Sprint) Meets are covered through our program fees and fundraising/sponsorships. Aqua 7 league meets have an event fee that is charged to individual swimmers. All invitational and championship meets charge a per event fee as well as a fee for relay swims. Some of these meets also have an entry fee that is charged to the swimmer to allow them to compete. These fees are paid to the host club.

NHAC also charge a flat fee for all meets called a "splash fee". This fee helps offset the cost of coaching at the swim meets. Both, the meet and splash fees are charged at the time or shortly after the meet. All meet related charges are charged to the individual swimmer's account. Please check your account regularly, especially during meet season, as fees will be due according to our policy (see below).

#### Meet Fees, Scratches & No Shows

**PLEASE NOTE:** Once you have registered your child for a meet, you are agreeing to the cost of any fees associated with the meet (registration/event fees). If you are unable to attend the



meet it is your responsibility to inform your swimmer's coach at least 2 days before the registration deadline (look on the event page) to ensure that you are not responsible for paying the meet fee. If your swimmer is not able to make it to the meet, you must also inform their coach so that they can be 'Scratched', i.e., removed from their event without penalty. Please be aware that there is a scratch deadline (posted in the Meet Package) after which it is not possible to scratch without penalty and you will be responsible for paying the meet fees. This also applies to finals.

#### Relay NO SHOWS

Any swimmer entered in a relay event who does not scratch by the appropriate time OR who misses their swim is responsible for **THE ENTIRE RELAY FEE.**

#### Refund Policy

If a swimmer is no longer a member of NHAC for medical reasons, a portion of registration fees will be refunded. Swim Ontario Fees, Western Region Association Fees and Shark Fest (if applicable) however are non-refundable. Club fees shall be pro-rated and refunded accordingly to the nearest month end. Any outstanding meet fees must be paid in full prior to the issue of any refund. Refunds will be issued 30 days from written notice accompanied by a copy of a doctor's note.

After February 1 of any swim season no refund will be issued unless accompanied by a copy of a doctor's note.

Swimming Canada/Swim Ontario registration fees are non-refundable.

#### Code of Conduct

The Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club (NHAC) is committed to maintaining an environment of respect and accountability so that all members can develop and grow to their highest potential and maintain healthy relationships. A member is any swimmer, a swimmer's parent or guardian, a coach, official, volunteer or any other person that is reasonably associated with the Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club. As a club, we adhere to the Swim Ontario Code of Conduct that can be found on the Swimming Ontario Website or by following this link: [Swim Ontario Code of Conduct](#) The Norfolk Hammerhead Aquatic Club's Code of Conduct reflects the standards and expectations of our governing bodies, Swim Ontario and Swimming Canada. It can be found on our website ([NHAC Code of Conduct](#)). All members are expected to always adhere to these codes of conduct when they are acting in their role with NHAC.

#### NHAC Code of Conduct

Expectations of ALL Members include:

- Respect for and good sportsmanship towards teammates and competitors, parents, and volunteers
- Courtesy, respect and co-operation with coaches and officials



- Respect for the rules and appropriate conduct during meets, trips, and training sessions
- Respect for public and private property, including pool decks, change rooms, and on trips, buses or other vehicles of transportation, hotel rooms, lobbies, and other facilities
- Prohibitions:
  - No drinking or transporting of alcoholic beverages
  - No smoking or chewing tobacco
  - No illegal drugs (which if found, could be turned over to the appropriate authorities)
  - No sexual harassment or other discriminatory behavior
  - No sexual fraternization on trips
  - No entertaining of outside guests in hotel rooms
  - No bullying
- Responsibilities of the Swimmer:
  - Attend practices and dryland training in accordance with the NHAC attendance policy
  - Be on time for practices and meets
  - Use the proper attire/equipment including official NHAC clothing at meets
  - Leave pool facility promptly at the end of each practice
  - Leave the pool deck and change rooms clean and in good condition with no damage to facility. Swimmers will refrain from spraying water/soap in the main change room.
  - Be respectful of fellow patrons of the pool

## Discipline

A Breach of conduct will result in an evaluation by the Head Coach and/or Director of HR and Ethics depending on the incident in question. More severe breaches of conduct on the part of any member will be referred by the Director of HR/Ethics to the Board of Directors. Disciplinary action up to and including a temporary suspension, or dismissal from the Club (subject to approval by the Board of Directors) may occur.

Discipline of a swimmer is left to the discretion of the Age Group and/or Head Coach. The Coach has the authority to ask a swimmer to leave the pool and remain on deck for the duration of the practice or to dismiss the swimmer from a practice or an upcoming meet. In the event of recurring incidents, the coach may engage in a private discussion with the swimmer and their parent/guardian. As a last resort, a swimmer (or NHAC member) may be asked, after due process, to leave the Club.

If an issue is not resolved by the coach to the satisfaction of all individuals involved, the issue may be referred to the Director of HR/Ethics for further consideration. In the case of swimmer discipline, the order of authority is Head Coach -> Director of HR/Ethics or President -> Board of



Directors. Termination will require an Executive vote and it may be necessary to involve third party advice. Safety must always take precedence.

## Communication

The Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club Website ([www.hammerheads.ca](http://www.hammerheads.ca)) is the main source of information about meets, practices and events.

### Swim Meets & Events

Event and meet information will be posted on the website in as timely a manner as possible. It is the responsibility of individual families to check the information and to sign up for meets to confirm attendance. All meets have a signup deadline after which, it may not be possible for our Head Coach to register your swimmer for the meet. All pertinent information will be posted under the event on the team website.

### Swim Meets

All swim meets will have a meet package linked as a file. Meet packages contain detailed information on the individual meets, including the sign-up deadline, location, event times and contact information for the official's coordinator. Meets with qualifying standards or restrictions will be noted on our website under the event and in the Meet package. It is essential that swim parents understand how to read a meet package. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask a board member or your swimmer's coach.

#### To Sign-up for Meets (via the website)

- On the home page go to Upcoming Events
- Click on the Edit Commitment Button (blue)
- Click on your Athlete's Name
- Select Yes, please sign [YOUR ATHLETE] up for this event under "Signup Record" and select the Days/Sessions that you can attend
- Click on Save Changes
- NB: It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their swimmer's coach is informed if the swimmer is unable to attend the meet.

### SportsEngine Motion App

The SportsEngine Motion app is a great communication tool. The app contains all the key features of our website, along with calendars, links to events, meet sign-ups and volunteer/officials' sign-ups. The app is a handy communication tool for our coaches and allows them to send instant messages to parents. This function must be enabled by each user. Please familiarize yourself with the app.

### Emails & Texts

The NHAC practice schedule is diverse, so email is the best way communicate with the team. We try to keep the number of messages to a minimum and target our communication when





possible. Every email that you receive will have important information that you need to know. Please take time to read them.

Urgent messages (e.g. last minute practice cancelations) will be sent by email and/or text. To receive text messages, you will need to enter your cell number & Carrier on the SMS/Carrier lines on your Account Info page. PLEASE check your member account to ensure that this information is up to date.

### Calendar

There is a calendar for 'Practices', 'Team Events' and a general 'Calendar' on the website. The Practices calendar will show each swim group's swim practice schedule and will be updated (to the best of our ability) to reflect any changes or known cancelations. The Team Event calendar lists swim meets and team events that are coming up. Other information will also be posted on the website so please check periodically.

### Pool Closures and Rescheduling

Parents will be informed promptly of any changes or cancellation by email and on the NHAC website. Practices will not be rescheduled if the pool is shut down due to circumstances that are beyond the Club's control. There will be no refund for sessions missed based on a shut down from one of our facilities. In the event of longer-term closures, the board will attempt to secure pool time at another facility, if available.

NHAC reserves the right to reorganize training sessions to accommodate for changes and scheduling issues that arise. Families will be informed of the any changes as soon as possible.

### Protection of Personal Information Protocols and Swimmer Safety

NHAC takes every reasonable precaution to protect your personal information. The following information outlines our procedures and required documentation. Please take time to review this section.

### Swimming Canada Safe Sports

NHAC is committed to providing a safe environment for our swimmers to grow, develop and compete. Information regarding Safe Sports is now available on the NHAC website under team forms/resources. You can also review it by clicking on the following link: [Safesport](#)

### Publication Consent Agreement

The Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club occasionally uses photographs of swimmers and other members for promotional purposes. A consent for signed by a parent/legal guardian is



required at the start of the season. The form is found on our website and included with the registration process.

### Personal Information Protection & Electronic Documents Act (Privacy)

Personal data is collected as part of our normal procedures during registration and for events during the season (e.g. meets and team travel). Personal data is treated by NHAC according to the Canadian Personal Information Protection & Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). A parent/legal guardian is required to sign a consent form for the collection of personal data at the time of registration with Swim Ontario.

### Concussion Protocol

Concussion is a serious injury to the brain that may occur because of an impact during participation in sports. NHAC follows the Swim Ontario Concussion Guidelines that can be found on the Swim Ontario website ([Swim Ontario Concussion Guidelines](#)). A parent/legal guardian is required to review this information on an annual basis. NHAC requires this review to be completed at the time of registration with Swim Ontario.

### Coaches

The Head Coach and Age Group Coach(es) are hired on a contractual basis. Our coaching staff are professional swim coaches and are certified with Swimming Canada. They bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to our club with many years of experience as swimmers and swim coaching. Please respect their experience – despite all we have learned as swimming parents, our coaches are still the best people to help our swimmer(s) to achieve their best in the pool.

#### Head Coach: Trent McNicol

Coach Trent McNicol holds an NCCP Level 2 certification and has over 25 years of coaching experience. He primarily coaches senior athletes in the Gold and Gold Development programs and provides on-deck coaching and support at swim meets for swimmers in the 13 & over category. The Head Coach is responsible for overseeing the entire NHAC training program and to act as a consultant/trainer for the Assistant Coaches. The coaching team works together, under the guidance of the Head Coach, to develop and deliver a seamless program to our swimmers.

Trent's Philosophy is that "The focus of our program will be on stroke techniques and swimmer development. We will encourage fitness and fun while working on the fundamentals of our sport. There is a lot of hard work in this sport and with that comes confidence and a positive attitude."

#### Age Group Coaches: Kristina Steins (Kay)

The Age Group coach is a NCCP certified swim coach. She uses her extensive personal knowledge to develop this program and get them ready for competitions. Some highlights of



her time as a swimmer are various competitions in both Canada and throughout the world. Kay was a gold medalist in all backstroke events every year (50, 100 and 200) and still holds the National Records in those events. Kay attended a Division 1 school on a full swimming scholarship in Louisville, Kentucky. Kristina Steins coaches the Recreation, Intro to Stroke, Stroke Development and Train to Compete programs. She provides on-deck coaching and support at swim meets, typically for swimmers aged 12 & under. The Age Group coaches supervises and directs the Assistant and Junior Coaches.

Some of her favourite motivational quotes are “Never back up and never back down” and “I don’t get ready, I stay ready!”

### Assistant and Junior Coaches

The Assistant and Junior Coaches are senior (Gold/Gold Development group) swimmers who provide on-deck coaching support, primarily for the Recreation and Junior programs. The Assistant coach (if applicable) is NCCP Level 1 certified and may occasionally independently coach the Recreation, Intro to Stroke or Stroke Development groups.

### Communication with Coaches

Please get to know your swimmer’s coach and share any concerns or information that will help them to provide the best training for your swimmer. That said - Let the Coach, coach! Our coaches steer the swimmer’s direction within the program. The team supports an athlete-centered vision that is driven by the coach and supported by the executive and family. Remember that the coaches are the ones fully qualified to judge a swimmer’s performance and technique. As parents our role is to provide support for the swimmers. The best way to help athletes achieve their goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake and if your swimmer does make one, remember that he/she is still learning. Encourage all efforts and point out the things done well. If the athlete gave his/her best effort, each young person deserves to feel like a winner.

Parents are welcome to arrange a meeting with their swimmer’s coach but are not to be on deck during training or at swim meets.

## Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club Structure and Attendance Policy

### Gold Group

Members of this squad will train to compete with success at the National, Junior and International level. The head coach will identify those swimmers that have the potential ability to train at the Gold level. Athletes will have the opportunity to experience a high level of training, personal goals, character building and challenging oneself continuously. Swimmers in this group will work consistently toward character development, self discipline and making informed daily decisions that will define the high-level athlete they can become. Gold functions as a microcosm of the sport, whereby the strongest swimmers will ultimately rise to the top. The culture of this group is becoming more competitive all the time, and all swimmers have a



daily opportunity to excel among their teammates. Athletes in this squad should be looking beyond age group competitions and be relentlessly seeking access to Senior National (open) and International Competitions.

Athletes in this squad must be prepared and willing to train at the prescribed volumes and intensities including maintaining a minimum 90% attendance to compete at swim meets.

Due to the high level of dedication, determination, and pushing the limits of oneself, there will be swimmers who at times may not be able to continue with the program. Swimmers who have been asked to move to this group must enter with the understanding that it will be hard work, however many swimmers will be extremely proud of their accomplishments and at the same time will discover that it can also be a lot of fun too. Those swimmers who are willing to commit to the work, follow the program and consistently push themselves beyond even their own expectations will be champions, in essence those who are “tough enough” will succeed.

### Gold Development

Members of this squad will compete with success at the Regional, Festival, Provincial Age Group and National Age Group Championships. Although older swimmers will be a part of this squad at the outset, the majority will move to the Gold squad as they develop so Gold Development is a squad typically comprised of athletes aged 12-14. It is a “Pre-Gold” group that will prepare athletes for promotion to the Gold Squad. The focus of this squad’s training program is to offer training that is specific to the demands of racing and bridge the gap from the general speed and endurance work that is done before the onset of puberty. Athletes will be challenged mentally and physically at practice as they learn to manage themselves through more complex training objectives. Although this squad will not endeavor to offer the intensities demanded in Gold, the training program will be challenging, nonetheless. Like Gold, this squad is a melting pot. Not every athlete who joins the squad will complete the season. This healthy attrition is present in all performance-based programs in all sports, and our team should not be an exception.

### Train to Compete

The Train to Compete Squad, will turn our young swimmers into young RACERS. Strokes will be re-taught and modified, drills will be mastered, training habits will be established, and daily dryland training will be introduced. Most importantly, swimmers will be Coached with enthusiasm and pushed to race each other every day. Athletes will learn to win, and to lose, with pride. Athletes will learn that the thrill of competition is the heart of the sport: that winning is special and worth chasing, and that losing is a lesson that must come repeatedly to make those rare wins possible. The strict age groupings in these two squads will ensure that athletes are trained in a manner appropriate to their stage of physical development, and standardized skill requirements can also be imposed more easily.



### Stroke Development

Swimmers will be placed in this squad directly from public lesson programs, from other competitive programs or will be promoted from our Juniors (learn to swim program) program. Swimmers in this squad will work extensively on creating the habits that will eventually make or break their careers as teenagers: reading the clock, counting strokes, breathing patterns, push-offs, dives, turns and breakouts. Swimmers will also learn lane etiquette, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Swimmers will be taught to see themselves as athletes not participants, and as racers not as recreational swimmers. Finally, swimmers in the Stroke Development Squad will perform basic training sets suited to their age and physical development.

### Intro to Stroke

Intro to Stroke is an entry level competitive program for 10 and Under swimmers. All facets of competitive swimming will be introduced and explained, and athletes will practice these skills, drills and techniques in fun environment that emphasizes racing and competition as often as possible. Athletes will be divided into small groups and work through the content of the practice under the direction of the Age-Group and Assistant Coach. Junior Coaches will be used to help teach objectives and manage the practice. Athletes will be promoted into the Stroke Development and Train to Compete as they become ready to do so.

### Recreation Program

The Recreation Program is open to swimmers of all ages and abilities and teaches the fundamentals of swimming for those who simply want to enjoy the sport. The structure is like the Intro to Stroke program in that the skills, drills and techniques are taught in a fun, small group environment. The emphasis is on swimming for health and fun, but athletes will be introduced to racing and competitive swimming. Recreation swimmers can move to the competitive program if they develop an interest in competitive swimming. Please speak with your swimmer's coach if they are interested.

### Required Equipment

All swimmers require a practice swimsuit, swim goggles and a towel. As swimmers progress through the program, they will need other equipment for practice. The list of equipment needed for each group is found on our website and can be purchased through our supplier- Ly Sprots or by contacting our Apparel Co-ordinator. Swimmers who repeatedly show up to practice without appropriate equipment, will sit out during the sets that require that piece of equipment.

### The Strokes

The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. As you watch your swimmer compete or train, they will be swimming these strokes or a drill that is designed to practice a particular part of that stroke.



## Freestyle

The freestyle is an event where one may swim any stroke one wishes. However, almost always, the stroke used is the front crawl, which is characterized by an alternating overhand motion of the arms and an alternating up and down flutter kick.

## Backstroke

The backstroke consists of an alternation motion of the arms with a flutter kick. Legally the swimmer may also swim any stroke one wishes if he/she is on their back. On turns, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must remain on their back when finishing the race.

## Breaststroke

The breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pulled from the breast in a heart-shaped pattern and recovered under or over the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion like the action of a frog. No flutter, scissors or dolphin kick is permitted. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously.

## Butterfly

The butterfly features a simultaneous overhand stroke of the arms combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter kick, scissor kick, or use the breaststroke kick. The butterfly was developed in the early 1950's as a variation of the breaststroke and it became an Olympic stroke in 1956.

## Individual Medley (IM)

The individual medley, commonly referred to as the "IM", is when the swimmer begins the event with the butterfly, then changes after one fourth of the race to backstroke, then to breaststroke and finally to freestyle. In the Medley Relay, all four strokes are swum. The relay team is made up of four swimmers. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second swims breaststroke, the third swims butterfly and the final swimmer swims freestyle.

## Swim Meets 101

Participating in swim meets throughout the season is a vital and essential part of a swimmer's development. Competing at swim meets will allow swimmers to log "Official Times". That is, their finish times for each race they participate in will be recorded. As they progress and become faster, their Official Times can make them eligible to participate at other, higher-level meets. All swimmers are encouraged to participate in as many swim meets as they are eligible for so that they can develop confidence and experience the fun of competing.

## The Swim Season

The swim season is divided into two categories:

- Short Course refers to swimming in a 25 meter pool, such as ours.
- Long Course refers to swimming in a 50 meter pool.



Our Fall/Winter season begins in September. During the first few weeks, all swimmers will meet with the coaching staff and together they will determine what program is best suited for them. The season ends for each individual swimmer according to their final championship meet. Novice swimmers will have their finals in early May but may swim into early June if they make Western Championships (aka Regionals) times. Competitive Hammerhead swimmers competing in the long course season will have their final meet in early July.

### Swim Meets

NHAC participates in many different types of swim meets throughout the season. All meets are competitive, sanctioned meets but they vary in the level of competition.

Sanctioned meets are swim meets that have been approved (sanctioned) by Swim Ontario. They are run by experienced Swimming Canada certified officials, using appropriate timing equipment, and following Swimming Canada rules to ensure that all times obtained meet Canadian/Fina standards. Times obtained at a sanctioned meet are considered 'official' and are used to qualify a swimmer for higher level meets with "qualifying times".

### Sprint Meets

These are in-house, developmental meets where swimmers are competing to establish or improve their own times. NHAC may host 3-4 Sprint meets each season to give swimmers the opportunity to prepare for competition at invitational and championship meets. They are a great way for junior and senior athletes to get to know one another and for our seniors to mentor their younger teammates.

### Aqua 7 League Meets

This is a league for our entire team. Aqua 7 meets are a great way to introduce new swimmers to competition. The swim meet is held against a small number of clubs and, while they are sanctioned, well-ran meets, they are also relaxed and provide an opportunity for novice swimmers to learn. Races are usually one length for younger swimmers, two or four lengths for older swimmers.

In most years there are 4 meets per year plus a championship meet in May. Swimmers must compete in 3 meets throughout the year to qualify for finals. Aqua 7 League meets are hosted at different locations. Aqua 7 Championships in May is an Aqua 7 League only meet and is considered a developmental meet. All the Aqua 7 meets, including championships are sanctioned meets and swimmers can use the times at these meets to qualify for Regional, Provincial and National Championship meets. There is an entry fee per swimmer, which and it allows them to enter into 3 races.

### Invitational Meets

Organized by individual clubs for specifically designated levels of swimmers. Although the program is approved or sanctioned by Swimming Canada, the individual club can set their own program for the meet. Swimmers must be registered as competitive. These meets are usually



open to all NHAC swimmers, but you should speak with your swimmer's coach to see if he/she is ready for the meet.

### Championship Meets

These meets are a higher level of competition and are open to swimmers that have qualified with certain times. The meets, in increasing order of competition (slower to faster time standards) are: Western region "B" Championships (Short and Long Course), Provincial Age Group Championships (Short and Long Course), Ontario Team Championships (maximum of 20 swimmers), Junior and youth National Championships and Team Championships. Time standards for each meet are posted on Swim Ontario's website, on the NHAC website (<https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/cannhac/page/forms--team-info>) and on the SportsEngine Motion App.

### Meet Organization

- Meets are either run as
  - A single session where all races for all ages are run during a single 4-hour session OR
  - In multiple sessions where swimmers are separated into 12 & under/13 & over categories and all races are run in separate 4-hour sessions, sometimes over multiple days
- There is an event for each gender AND stroke.
- Events are divided into heats based on specific age (e.g. 10 & under, 11-12, 13-15, 15 & over); heats are organized from the slowest to the fastest swimmers
- Swimmers need to know the event, heat AND Lane number for each of their swims
  - Swimmers are usually 'marshalled' at developmental meets (e.g. Sprint/Aqua 7 meets) i.e. someone will help them into their heat group and to the right block/lane
  - Our senior swimmers and coaches are always available to help
  - In higher levels of meets, swimmers either self-marshall (get themselves to the right block at the right time) OR they might need to check in with the Clerk of Course (this is a Positive Check-in)
- Larger multi-day meets typically have Finals for the 13 & over group and Timed Finals for 12 & under
- Swimmers must qualify for Finals in a particular event/race – i.e., they finish in the top 8 (or 10) of their age group.
  - Finals usually require a "Positive Check-in" i.e., the swimmer identifies themselves to the Clerk of Course (there will be a table)
  - PLEASE NOTE: 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> (or 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>) place finishers are the alternates for Finals so be sure to come back because your swimmer may have a chance to swim if someone does not show (Scratches)
- In timed finals swimmers are awarded according to their finish time in their race; smaller (e.g. single or double session meets) typically have timed finals only





- All information about the meet (number of sessions, events & event times, check-in requirements, session starts & warm up times) are found in the Meet Package (check the NHAC website under the meet event)

### Key Info Regarding Swim Meets

- REGISTER FOR MEETS: you need to sign your swimmer up for meets on the website or SportsEngine Motion App (see instructions above)
- DO SIGN-UP for MEETS: Soccer teams do not just practice dribbling & passing a ball – they train to play games. Swim meets are the games of the swimming world! Your child is a Competitive Swimmer and will get faster when the more they compete.
- All the meets mentioned have their own qualifying time standards, which are set either provincially or nationally.
- Most meets have entry fees that range from \$10.00 and up per event
- Some events will be one-day events (either held on a Saturday or a Sunday), others are held for 2-4 days from Thursday to Sunday.

### The Day of the Meet

- Swim meets ALWAYS start off with warm-ups that begin 45-60 minutes before the meet. Please show up early so that your swimmer can arrive on deck 5-10 minutes before warm-ups start so they can stretch and prepare themselves.
- Remember, parents are not allowed on deck. Ask your swimmer to find their coach – they will be on deck early to help your swimmer. At larger meets, your coach will be at the team table.
- Prepare your swimmer with a healthy breakfast (&/or lunch) prior the meet. Depending on the meet/location, snacks may be allowed on deck. Please send healthy snacks only. Your swimmer's coach can guide you.
- Swimmers need to stay hydrated during meets - SEND A WATER BOTTLE
- There is usually a viewing gallery or bleachers where parents can watch the meet BUT the BEST SEAT in the HOUSE is to be on deck as an official.

## Technical Information & Terms

### Marshalling

When the swimmers are at a swim meet, they are always together on the pool deck as a team. The coaching staff will make them aware of their next race and prepare them for it. Prior to their race, the swimmer goes to an area (called Marshalling) where they are given their timecard, which will tell them what heat and lane they are in. From there the athletes will hand their cards to the timers before the start of the race. When they hear the whistle blow, they may get onto the starting blocks. Starts: Many races are won or lost by the swimmer's performance in the start or during the turns. In the start, the starter will check that all swimmers are motionless. When the swimmers are set, the gun or starting horn is sounded to start the race. Most of our meets invoke a one-start rule that means that there are no second attempts for the swimmer who has false started a race. The swimmer is told after the race that he/she is disqualified.



## Turns

In turns there are definite rules to follow in each event. In freestyle the only rule regarding turns is that the swimmer must simply touch the wall with any part of their body. In breaststroke and butterfly the swimmer must touch the wall with two hands simultaneously before making their turn. In the backstroke the turn rules are more complex. The swimmer can simply touch the wall while still on his/her back and then spin around and continue the backstroke. The swimmer can also turn onto his/her stomach just before the wall and is allowed one arm pull before they must initiate a flip turn. This is a turn that must be practiced being done correctly and efficiently. The best method is to count the strokes from the flags and through practice know when to turn. Most disqualifications at meets are on backstroke turns.

## Disqualification

Disqualification of races, whether for incorrect stroke or turn technique or for a false start, are an inevitable part of competitive racing. Disqualifications happen to all swimmers at one time or another and the coaching staff works with the swimmer on the technical and sometimes, psychological changes that will enhance and correct the race for the next time. Each race will be a learning experience and a new challenge, making competitive swimming a sport that is worth the effort to work hard and achieve positive results. The team coaching staff is there for each swimmer through all the challenges and successes and each NHAC swimmer will find a positive and supportive environment as a member. **Note: Disqualification is of the race, not the swimmer.**

## Role of the Swim Parent/Guardian

Parents are a vital part of our club! Aside from your role as chief cheerleader for your swimmer you can have a big impact on their experience by supporting their team! NHAC is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization. We do not have a swim team if we don't have parents to help run it.

It is important that all swimmers are on time for the workouts and that each swimmer is attending on a regular basis. The swimmer needs to be at the pool 15 minutes before each workout starts. This is a critical time for stretching, equipment preparation and prompt practice starts, as well as time to meet friends before workout. In order to aid in our child's training, we must consider physical and mental aspects of each child. The swimmer requires a sound diet consisting of well-balanced, nutritional meals that meet the energy requirements of the child. We have no interest in telling anyone how to feed his or her children, however, should your child develop into a highly ranked competitive swimmer, then you should expect their diet to become an issue. Adequate rest is also essential.

Like all parental roles, money is involved. We must cover the cost of our swimmer's fees, minimal equipment costs and team wear, travel cost, entry fees for meets attended and other requirements for fundraising.



Volunteer parents are needed throughout the year to assist with our various committees and to help at swim meets and other club functions. Please volunteer your services. We need each one of our members, and your help will be greatly valued and appreciated.

All parents must always remain off the pool deck, both at the complex and at all meets (when not officiating). Swim Ontario insurance requirements dictate this guideline. Also, it is the sole responsibility of our Head Coach and Coaching staff to direct the swimmers and deal with meet issues in the proper manner. Sometimes we are tempted to be involved in coaching, even as we sit above the pool deck. It does help to address issues directly with the coach, after workouts or as illustrated under “communications” in this handbook. While the coaching staff is involved with 20-30 swimmers at a time, you are watching just one. Should you see something that the coaching staff should know about, please feel free to mention it.

Always remember that your biggest role should be one of encouragement and support. A simple formula to remember is this: Encouragement increases natural enthusiasm. Our staff does not advocate a gold medal performance at each meet. They do, however, recognize and congratulate genuine effort. If a swimmer is led to believe that they must produce medals to receive recognition, then we begin to undermine their natural enthusiasm. A swimmer who is victorious in a race should receive enthusiastic cheers but should not be put on a pedestal. However, a swimmer who is beaten out of a ribbon should not be scolded. Young swimmers are very aware of disappointment and a continued discussion only makes things worse. As young athletes, these swimmers are remarkably tough, and it does not take long to recover from a temporary setback with support and encouragement. Athletes cannot be winners all the time, but with proper support they will learn to accept that winning does not mean bringing home all the ribbons all the time. Ribbons are nice, but if there are no personal time improvements to accompany the award, its attractiveness will soon wear off. Help to encourage fun and good times; sports are meant to be enjoyed!

### Becoming a Swim Official (& getting the best seat in the house)

Swim meets cannot run without a team of volunteers Swim Officials on deck. In fact, a team is not allowed to host a swim meet if they do not have Officials to help. The first step is to become a Timer by taking the Timekeeper/Safety Marshall Clinic before the first meet of the season. Clinics take about 1 hour and will be held on a swim night or can be taken virtually. All swim parents are encouraged to volunteer their time at home meets. Becoming a Swim Official is the best way to learn about your child's sport.

Swim Officials work up a ladder from Level One (Timekeepers) to Level Five. To move up the official's ladder, involves taking different courses that teach the different deck positions and roles PLUS obtaining experience (signoffs) for each position. The courses are:

- Intro to Swimming Officiating and Safety Marshal (Level I)
- Inspectors of Turns and Judge of Stroke (Level II)
- Clerk of Course (Level II)
- Chief Timer (Level II)
- Chief Finish Judge / Chief Judge Electronics (Level II)
- Recorder / Scorer (Level II)
- Meet Manager (Level II)
- Starter (Level II)
- Referee (Level III)
- A more detailed description is found on the Swim Ontario website under the Officials Tab ([Swim Ontario Officials](#) )

NHAC does offer several Officials Courses throughout the swim season. Alternatively, the courses are available online or as webinars through Swim Ontario. Contact the Club Officials Chair for more details.

## Volunteer Commitment

NHAC is a parent-run organization. The only way for us to offer the programs that we do is to have parent volunteers helping to run the club. Every family is obligated to provide 15 hours of volunteer time each year. This is split into a commitment of 7.5 hours in the Short Course (Fall) season and 7.5 hours during the Long Course (Spring) season. If you are not able to make the full commitment you will be charged \$175 for each 7.5 hours missed (\$350 total if all 15 hours are not completed). The timing of the volunteer commitment may be adjusted by the board depending on the distribution of potential volunteer opportunities available in each season. The fee must be paid before your swimmer can register for the next season. **Please note** there are some years that this is not enforced. As the team grows again post-Covid, we are also working to build our volunteer base.

There are many ways to volunteer with NHAC, including as a Swim Official, on Fundraising or Sponsorship committees, as a chaperone (hours will be adjusted to the time spent working, not the total hours away), organizing food for meets and as a Board Member. Providing food for our pot-luck lunches or banquets will not count as volunteer hours. Please note that volunteers, especially those who are in close contact with children and vulnerable persons are required to submit Security Screening

## Security Screening

To protect our young athletes, an annual security screening is required for all individuals who volunteer with the club and who may harm children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. According to Swim Ontario policy, the following positions require security screening be submitted to and reviewed by NHAC:



#### Police Records Check (PRC):

- All board members.
- Any persons with access to sensitive personal or confidential information, or financial records or money.
- All Level 4 and Level 5 officials.
- Required initially and every 3 years thereafter

#### Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)

- Submitted to the club
- Reviewed by Swim Ontario
- Any coach 19 & over who coaches children or vulnerable people.
- Any persons involved in the delivery of developmental programs for swimmers such as clinics or camps.
- Any persons affiliated with provincial teams; and
- Any persons appointed to accompany a team with swimmers under the age of 18 or other vulnerable people to a camp, competition, or other event (e.g., team manager, chaperones).
- VSC is required every three (3) years and an Offence Declaration in off years
- VSCs must have been issued within the past 365 days

#### Security Screening Request Letter & Offence Declaration Form

Security screening, including Police Records Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks are provided free of charge from your local police detachment for volunteers. Volunteers are required to submit a letter confirming their role along with the screening application. A letter is available from the club President upon request. An Offence Declaration form is available on the Hammerheads website under Forms ([Offence Declaration Form](#) link).