

Vernon Kokanee Swim Club

Grassroots Program Information Sheet

What is the difference between Grassroots and Red Cross swimming lessons?

In Vernon, Red Cross lessons are offered by Recreation Services for a wide span of age groups, from babies to skilled swimmers and aim to teach water safety and swimming skills in a fun environment.

While using the same pool, Grassroots lessons are offered by the Vernon Kokanee Swim Club with the aim to develop technical swimming skills so that the child can swim all the basic strokes correctly. By the end of this program a swimmer should be ready to start swimming on a competitive club level.

What age is Grassroots suitable for?

Most children entering the program are school aged (6 years or older). However, children as young as 5 can enter the program, provided their swimming skills are sufficient. Very young swimmers may take longer to advance through the program.

Which skills should a swimmer have to enter the program?

A swimmer needs to be able to:

- kick with a kick board and fins for 25 m on their front and back;
- be comfortable in the water;
- do “Bobs” with rhythmic breathing;
- enter the water feet first
- do a Star Float on front and a Star Float on back;
- kick with a kick board for 12.5 m on the front and back.

What is the procedure to register for Grassroots?

Contact the Vernon Kokanee Swim Club Administrator at kokaneeswimclub@shaw.ca to indicate your interest. Usually there is a wait list and the Administrator will contact you once spaces become available. Your child’s swimming skills will then be evaluated by a coach to determine at which level they can enter the program. At this stage you will be instructed by the administrator to register your child online for the next available session.

Why is there a wait list and how long can we expect to be on it?

Grassroots is a popular program and the swim club prefers new competitive members to have completed this program. Swimmers progress through the program at different speeds and spaces become available as swimmers leave the program and / or enter the competitive swim club.

At which level will my child enter the program?

A coach will determine your child's level. If your child has taken swimming lessons with another program, their level may roughly be converted as follows:

Grassroots Level 1 = Red Cross Swim Kids 1-3

Grassroots Level 2 = Red Cross Swim Kids 3-7

Grassroots Level 3 = Red Cross Swim Kids 7-8

Please note this is just a general guideline. All new swimmers must attend an evaluation conducted by our coaches to determine level placement.

Are the Grassroots swimmers members of the Vernon Kokanee Swim Club?

Grassroots swimmers are part of the swim club, but are not competitive members who participate in swim meets other than the Grassroots Mini Meets. They have full access to club supplies and are invited to participate in some social events of the club. They may choose to participate in fundraising for the club.

Tell me more about the Grassroots swimming lesson schedule.

There are three sessions per year. A 13-week fall session, a 10-week winter session and a 10-week spring session. The child swims twice a week (Monday and Wednesday OR Tuesday and Thursday).

Scheduling for the different levels are as follows:

Grassroots 1 - 5:00pm to 5:30pm

Grassroots 2 - 5:30pm to 6:15pm

Grassroots 3 - 6:15pm to 7:00pm

On the last day of the session (Wednesday or Thursday), all swimmers will participate in a **Grassroots Mini Meet**. Swimmers are introduced to competitive swimming in a fun environment and do not compete against each other, but will try to improve their personal times from one Mini Meet to another. Parents are expected to become involved with this, doing various tasks such as putting out chairs, time keeping and handing out of ribbons. Each swimmer gets a ribbon for first participation in an item, as well as for personal time improvement. The Mini Meet takes place from 5pm to approximately 6:30pm and the coach will send more information via e-mail closer to the Meet.

Tell me more about the Grassroots program and the 3 levels.

Our Grassroots program teaches children the basics of the four swimming strokes: front crawl, backstroke, breast stroke and butterfly. The primary goal is to develop excellent swimming skills and a true love of aquatic activities. 54 key swimming skills are taught in 3 stages / levels.

Stage / Level 1 involves learning how to be comfortable in water, and how to move in the water. At this stage swimmers establish a sound basis for further acquisition of swimming skills. The orientation process consists of the combination of 5 skills:

- Entry and immersion
- Buoyancy and Floatation
- Submersion and breath control
- Movement in the water
- Propulsion through the water

Stage / Level 2 develops the skills learned in Stage / Level 1 and introduces basic movements and orientation ability needed for swimming strokes, such as arm action, sculling and breathing. Treading water and basic dives are also covered. Skills learnt in this stage include:

- Streamlining – propulsion
- Basic strokes – freestyle, backstroke, introductory breaststroke, basic dolphin movement
- Specific skills – underwater push-offs, submersion, treading water
- Introductory diving skills

Stage / Level 3 builds upon skills from Stage / Level 2 and improves all four strokes, reaction / rhythm abilities, and endurance. More advanced dives and basic turns are also covered. When learners have finished this stage, they will have become competent swimmers. Breathing and stroke timing are a major focus.

How long will my child be in the program / each level for?

Your child will swim in one level for at least one session and may continue swimming in the same level for a few sessions before progressing to the next level.

How will the coach determine if my child can progress to the next level?

At the end of each session, the Grassroots coach will use the checklist on our Swimmer Evaluation Card to determine which key skills the swimmer has mastered. Once all key skills in a level have been mastered, the child may progress to the next level. Space availability in each group will also be considered. The Grassroots coach will hand your child their Evaluation Card on the last day of each session, after the Mini Meet. Please hand the Evaluation Card back to the coach on the first day of the next session.