

# *NEW CBSC PARENT'S COMPETITIVE SWIMMING HANDBOOK*

Welcome to the CBSC and summer swimming! This handbook is designed to answer as many questions about the CBSC competitive swimming program as possible and to help make your child's summer swimming with the CBSC an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all.

## **WHAT IS A SUMMER SWIM CLUB?**

A summer swim club is a club whose organized aquatic program occurs between May 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Our CBSC swim program commences at the beginning of July and finishes 8 weeks later at the end of August.

## **WHAT IS COMPETITIVE SWIMMING?**

Simply put, competitive swimming is both an individual and a team sport. Individually, each swimmer competes in events with other swimmers in his or her chosen events. The goal is not to win every single race, but to continually refine technique, as well as to develop the good mental preparation skills required for competition. Although it is nice to win, the goal is more about achieving personal best times. The team aspect is found in cheering on teammates in their races, and in relays, plus having a great summer family activity and making new friends that will last a lifetime.

## **WHAT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF SUMMER SWIMMERS?**

There are two categories of swimmers:

- "S" Summer- swimmers who participate in aquatic activities in the summer and a restricted number of hours during the October 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> period, and
- "O" Winter- swimmers who participate in organized aquatic activities during the October 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> period in excess of the restricted hours.

The BC Summer Swimming Association (BCSSA) rules regarding "S" swimmers can be found on the BCSSA website at [bcsummerswimming.com](http://bcsummerswimming.com) but a portion of the rules are reproduced below:

### **Section 4.2.1.5: COMPETITOR ELIGIBILITY**

3. An "S" (Summer) Swimmer is an individual who trained and competed for an unrestricted number of hours between May 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> of any year. Between the October 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> period immediately preceding registration, an "S" Swimmer may have:

- a) Participated in a speed swimming training and/or swim meets, provided the activity(ies) did not exceed a total of two (2) hours within a calendar week. A calendar week is Sunday through Saturday. A swim meet counts as one hour of activity per day of meet.
- b) Trained and competed in a diving, water polo and synchronized swimming with no restrictions.

Please refer to the BCSSA website for additional rules regarding the "S" and "O" swimmer categories.

The CBSC has both "S" and "O" category swimmers participating at swim meets. All swimmers (both BCSSA registered and non BCSSA registered) are encouraged to sign up and participate in our July and August Galas. However, if an "O" swimmer wins an individual or family relay race, he/she will receive a medal but the trophy will be awarded to the first "S" swimmer to finish the race. In addition, an "O" swimmer cannot break a swim race

record at our Galas. Lastly, "O" swimmers are eligible for the girls, boys and breaststroke most points trophies but are not eligible for the age group aggregate trophies that are awarded after the August Gala.

## **WHAT ARE THE AGE GROUPS OR DIVISIONS FOR "S" SWIMMERS?**

Summer swimmers compete in separate age groups or divisions. A swimmer's age as of April 30<sup>th</sup> each year shall be used to determine the competitor's category of competition each year. The 8 competitor categories for swimming are:

- Division 1: 8 and under
- Div 2: 9-10 $\frac{1}{2}$
- Div 3: 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  - 12
- Div 4: 12 -13 $\frac{1}{2}$
- Div 5: 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  -15
- Div 6: 15-16
- Div 7: 17-19
- Div 8: 20 & Over

## **WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL, "B" OR "A" SWIMMER?**

**Developmental Swimmers** are usually our youngest swimmers that are introduced to competitive swimming and would learn the four competitive strokes, starts and turns. They would usually attend a few mid-week developmental meets during July that would commence in the afternoon and would finish in the early evening. They would also likely attend our CBSC "B" meet usually held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the CBSC program at our pool.

**"B" Swimmers** are usually returning swimmers who have attained B cut-off times in a stroke.

**"A" Swimmers** are swimmers that have attained an "A" cut-off time in a stroke.

Swimmers are usually "B" swimmers until they have swum an "A" time in a specific stroke. Since the designation is for each event, a swimmer can have some "B" events and some "A" events. "B" swimmers are allowed to swim in an "A" event, but an "A" swimmer cannot swim in a "B" event. For developmental swimmers, once they obtain a "B" time or higher, they cannot swim that event in a Developmental meet. They can continue to attend Developmental meets, swimming other events. "A" and "B" times are posted on the BCSSA website at [bcsummerswimming.com](http://bcsummerswimming.com).

## **GENERAL SWIM MEET INFORMATION**

Most BCSSA swim clubs host a competitive swim meet at some time from the beginning of May to end of July. Clubs attending the meet are required to sign up their swimmers usually one week in advance and any cancellations after that date are usually not refundable. Each individual entry costs between \$9 and \$10 so if a swimmer is signed up for 4 individual events, the club will be charged approximately \$36 to \$45 for that swimmer's entries. If a swimmer decides to not participate in a meet after the CBSC has submitted their entries it means that the entry fees are paid on behalf of the swimmer even though they have chosen to not attend the meet. Entry fees are non-refundable. In addition, if 4 swimmers are placed in one race and 3 of those swimmers do not attend, one swimmer is left to race without any competitors. For this reason, we ask that if your child signs up for a swim meet, that he/she attend the meet.

## WHEN AND WHERE ARE SWIM MEETS?

Developmental swim meets are usually held on Wednesday afternoons or early evenings and are usually finished by 8:00pm. "A" and "B" swim meets are held on weekends and are a full day activity. The meet can start as early as 6:15am for warm-ups and 8:00am for races and can finish as early as 3:00pm or as late as 6:00pm. Many BCSSA clubs host and participate in swim meets in May and June, but the CBSC usually commences to participate in meets in July. We attend meets throughout the lower mainland.

The Fraser South Regional swim meet is usually held at the Watermania pool in Richmond at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the CBSC program on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday and Sunday. In order for a swimmer to qualify to swim at the Regionals, he/she must have swum in at least one individual event at a BCSSA qualifying meet prior to the Regionals. Our CBSC B meet is not a qualifying meet.

Although all other swim meets are hosted by a specific club, the Regionals are hosted by the eleven BCSSA clubs in the Fraser South Region. As a Fraser South Regional club, the CBSC assists in organizing and managing the Regional swim meet. For the past number of years, we have set up the meet (lane ropes, sound system, tents, tables, etc), been responsible for providing runners on Saturday afternoon (volunteers that pick up the race cards after the race and deliver them to the results table), and take down all of the office equipment at the end of the meet. In addition, we are responsible for providing stroke and turn judges and officials at various time slots throughout the meet and 3 parent timers for one lane the entire meet.

The Provincial swim meet is usually held at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the CBSC summer. This meet is hosted by the eight regions in BC and is held in a different region each year. Some years, parents need to only drive for 30 minutes to attend the Provincials in the Lower Mainland while other years, parents must drive many hours to attend the Provincials in cities such as Trail, Prince George, Kamloops, or Victoria. Only swimmers that qualify at the Regionals for the Provincials attend the Provincial swim meet.

## HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR A SWIM MEET?

The head competitive swim coach will have a list of the swim meets that the club will be attending throughout the summer at registration. In addition, the swim meets should be listed on the CBSC website ([cbswimclub.ca](http://cbswimclub.ca)) prior to registration. We may participate in a developmental swim meet on the first Wednesday of the CBSC program and almost always participate in a competitive swim meet the weekend after the first week of the CBSC program. **Swimmers that want to attend those early swim meets must notify the head competitive coach before the end of registration day.**

For later swim meets, please notify the competitive swim parent liaison either by email or in writing. The head competitive swim coach and the competitive swim parent liaison will notify parents at the beginning of each summer as to the best method of notifying the coaches which swim meets your child will participate in.

A couple of days prior to the swim meet, the meet entries will be posted at the pool so that you will know which events your child has been registered to swim. There is no specific time for those events so it is not possible for the coach to provide an estimate of the time that your child will swim his/her events. In addition, the meet package (which provides the address of the pool, parking options, information on food that will be available at the meet etc) and the meet entries will be sent to the competitive families by email. Therefore, please provide your current email address to the coaches on registration day as well as your

swimmer's email address if they also would like to receive competitive information.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT A SWIM MEET?**

All swim meets start with warm-ups for approximately 30 minutes prior to the start of the meet. For meets with many swimmers, younger and older divisions will have separate warm-up times to accommodate all of the swimmers in the pool. Some families believe that it is more important to let their children sleep in and miss the warm-ups, but the warm-up is an important part of the meet because it allows the swimmer the opportunity to get a feel for the pool. Your coach has woken up early to be there, so please be there too!

When arriving at a meet, arrive 15 minutes prior to your child's scheduled warm-up time and find the CBSC tent. A parent volunteer is responsible for bringing the tent to the swim meets and all parents are requested to assist in putting up the tent. We usually place it in the same area around the pool as we have in past years, so it is always a good idea to ask a parent that attended the same meet in the prior year where the tent was placed.

After you have located the tent area, have your child meet the other swimmers so that they can go to the pool deck in a group and find their coach. Warm-up lanes are pre-assigned so you can check on the lane assignment in the meet package.

After your child has returned from the warm-ups, they can relax in the tent area until they begin to get organized for their first race. Approximately 45 min prior to their estimated race time, your child should go to talk with their coaches. The coaches from all the teams are usually sitting at a table on the pool deck. The child should bring with them their swim cap, goggles, and towel.

After talking with their coaches, they should proceed to the marshalling area. They will check in at the marshalling desk, then will be directed to sit on a bench with the other competitors in the same heat that they will be in. The swimmers on each bench move forward from bench to bench, and then onto the pool deck and behind their lane. They should have their cap and goggles on before the end of the race immediately before their race. For younger competitors, you may want to put on their cap before they sit in marshalling while the more experienced competitors may prefer to put on their cap and goggles when they are behind the lane waiting for their event.

Swimmers should not approach the blocks until the timers have finished timing the heat of swimmers ahead of them. After the race, swimmers do not leave the water until all swimmers in their heat have finished. Often, (but not in backstroke), the swimmer will be asked to stay in the water close to the wall until after the next heat of swimmers have started their race.

Swim meet organizers are not required to call the event numbers over the PA system. They are only required to call the event in the marshalling area. As a result, swimmers often hang around the marshalling area so they do not miss being called for their event. If they miss being called, they are scratched from the race and are not allowed to swim the event.

Programs are usually available for sale at each meet, which will indicate the order of events for the day.

After they race, the swimmer should go to their coaches to talk about their race and then into the tent for some relaxation, water and nutrition! There isn't usually an opportunity for your child to eat at normal meal times during swim meets. Swimmers usually eat smaller meals throughout the day.

## **WHAT IS A DQ?**

The first year your child swims competitively chances are that he/she will get disqualified.

Even experienced swimmers get disqualified at meets. The official making the disqualification (DQ) will tell the swimmers coach what the reason was for the DQ and the coach will then share that explanation with the swimmer. Some reasons for a DQ are:

- Incorrect take off, stroke, touch, or turn (especially breaststroke kick and backstroke turn)
- False start
- Interfering with another swimmer by going into the wrong lane
- Walking or pushing off the bottom of the pool
- Not completing a race, and
- Getting out of the water too early after a race

### **WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO A MEET?**

- Comfortable seating such as a lawn chair
- Sleeping bag for your swimmer
- Healthy food and lots of liquids
- Protection from the weather (sun lotion, rain gear, warm blankets/jackets)
- Extra goggles and caps
- Extra swim suits and towels (typically one towel per race, plus a towel for warm up)
- Warm clothes for your swimmer
- Activities for the swimmers (cards/games etc)

### **WHAT DO I FEED MY SWIMMER?**

Swimmers should give careful consideration to the quality and quantity of their diet. The following are some guidelines for 'competition-day' food.

- Pre-competition meal (night before) should be a hearty nutritious meal.
- Small and frequent nutritious snacks are preferable to large meals on the day of competition.
- Drink water beyond thirst requirements, as it is easy to become dehydrated during practices and meets.

Suggested Snacks:

- Crackers with cream cheese or peanut butter
- Bagels
- Dried to fresh fruit
- Yogurt
- Applesauce
- Nuts
- Veggies and dip

### **WHAT IS THE CBSC RELAY POLICY?**

At all swim meets (excluding Regionals and Provincials), the coaches make every attempt to have as many relay teams swim as possible. Relay teams are made up of four swimmers. Sometimes younger swimmers will be placed with older swimmers in an attempt to have all swimmers attending the meet participate in a relay.

At the regional swim meet, the head competitive coach will select swimmers to make the most competitive relay teams possible. The relay teams at Regionals will be selected based on the following criteria: best times, attendance at trainings and other swim meets, attitude, and team spirit. The regional relays will be posted at the CBSC clubhouse a few

days prior to the Regionals, but final decisions on some relays may be made at the Regionals based upon swim times at the Regionals in the individual events. All decisions regarding regional relays will be reviewed by either the CBSC swim chair or competitive swim parent liaison prior to posting the names of the swimmers.

In most situations, if a relay qualifies for provincials, the swimmers that qualified will be on the provincial relay team. However, if a relay swimmer is not able to attend the provincials, the head coach, in consultation with either the CBSC swim chair or competitive swim parent liaison will select a replacement relay swimmer.

## **HOW CAN PARENTS PARTICIPATE?**

Parent participation is vital to the success and survival of the CBSC. Similar to other summer swim clubs, we would not be able to continue without the volunteer assistance from the parents of the competitive swimmers. With less than 30 families involved in competitive swimming each year, we need all families to volunteer.

Some, but not all, of the volunteer activities for the competitive swim parents include:

- Be a member of the CBSC Board of Directors or swim committee,
- Order and sell the bathing suits and swim caps,
- Order the clothing for all swim coaches and distribute the clothing,
- Register all competitive swimmers, water polo players and synchronized swimmers with the BCSSA,
- Register the competitive swimmers for each swim meet,
- Become a stroke and turn judge or starting official and officiate at swim meets,
- Time at swim meets,
- Be the Developmental Competitive Swim Parent Liaison,
- Take the CBSC tent to all swim meets and bring the tent home after each swim meet,
- Purchase ribbons and medals for our CBSC B meet and July/August Galas,
- Record results and label ribbons and medals at our B meet and Galas,
- Organize food for officials at our B meet and Galas,
- Purchase and sell food at our B meet and Galas,
- Assist with the duty assigned to our club at the Regional Swim Meet,
- Organize the CBSC regional breakfast on the Friday morning before the Regional Swim Meet,
- Organize the competitive swim dinner on the Sunday evening after the Regional Swim Meet,
- Assist with the duty assigned to our region for the Provincial Swim Meet

This list is extensive for such a small group of parents so it is necessary that all competitive families participate in the volunteer activities. As a parent of a competitive swimmer, your minimum involvement must be to sign up for at least one shift of timing or officiating at the swim meets in which your child is entered. The sign-up sheets are posted each morning at the swim meet so sign up early so that you can select the most suitable time for your family. Our CBSC B meet, which is usually held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the CBSC program, requires extra parent participation. It is not only a great opportunity to get our B swimmers out to a swim meet but also a great opportunity to introduce non-competitive swimmers to swim meets by watching a meet in their own pool (and it is a fund-raiser for our club!). Make sure to mark the day on your calendar so that you are available to assist and cheer on your child. Very little experience is required for most volunteer activities. Come out, have some fun, and participate! If you want more information on participating, talk to the Head Competitive

Coach, Competitive Swim Parent Liaison, or Swim Chair.

## **WHAT ARE REGIONALS & PROVINCIALS?**

The most important swim meet of the season for the highly competitive swimmers is the BCSSA Provincial Championships, also known as "Provincials." In order to be able to swim at Provincials, swimmers must qualify at the meet known as the BCSSA Regional Championships, also known as "Regionals."