

CBSC COMPETITIVE SWIMMING PARENTS HANDBOOK

(updated May 2026)

Welcome to 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 swimming with 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 1st and September 30th each year. Our CBSC competitive swim program is unique compared to most summer swim clubs as our season commences at the beginning of July and finishes 8 weeks later at the end of August.

WHAT IS COMPETITIVE SWIMMING?

Simply put, competitive speed swimming is both an individual and a team sport. Individually, each swimmer competes in events with other swimmers within his or her age category, in their chosen events. The goal is not to win every single race, but to continually refine technique, increase speed and endurance, 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 relays, contributing to a team culture that is inclusive, hard working and fun, 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 train within a restricted number of hours during the October 1st to April 30th period.
- “O” Winter- swimmers who participate in organized aquatic activities during the October 1st to April 30th 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

The CBSC has both “S” and “O” category swimmers participating at swim meets.

All CBSC club members 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 at 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 30th each year shall be used to determine the competitor's category of competition each year. The 8 competitor categories for swimming are:

- Div 1: 8 & under
- Div 2: 9–10½
- Div 3: 10½–12
- Div 4: 12–13½
- Div 5: 13½–15
- Div 6: 15–16
- Div 7: 17–19
- Div 8: 20 & Over

BCSSA website offers an "Age Locator" every new swim season to help your swimmer determine which division they will compete in that year bcsummerswimming.com

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

Developmental Swimmers are usually our youngest swimmers who 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 finish in the early evening. They would also likely attend our CBSC "B" meet 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 in other events. "A" and "B" times will be updated yearly and provided by our Parent Rep.

GENERAL SWIM MEET INFORMATION

Most BCSSA swim clubs host a competitive swim meet at some time from the beginning of May to the 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. 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 these reasons, 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. Other swim meets are held on weekends and are a full-day activity. The meet can start as early as 6:00am 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 season commences to participate in meets in July. We attend meets throughout the Lower Mainland.

The Fraser South Regional swim meet (aka Regionals) is usually held at the end of the 5th week of the CBSC program on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday and all day Sunday. In order for a swimmer to qualify to swim at the Regionals, he/she must have swum that individual event at a BCSSA qualifying meet prior to the Regionals. Our CBSC B meet is not a qualifying meet for Regionals.

Although all other swim meets are hosted by a specific club, Regionals are hosted by all the Fraser South Clubs. Each club is assigned specific roles and tasks that help the swim meet run successfully. Every year, the assignments, such as marshalling, meet set-up, take down, office work, food, etc, are assigned. Your parent rep will inform everyone of our assigned role and will organize sign ups.. 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 are required for the entire meet.

The Provincial swim meet is usually held at the end of the 7th 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 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 calendar found on our website (cbswimclub.ca) prior to registration.

Parent Reps will send out meet information as it becomes available along with a Google form for sign-up. Deadlines will be very short due to the compressed summer schedule. Please pay close attention to your email inbox and note the dates and reply promptly. Please ensure that the correct email is on Activenet (this is how we compile our communication list) and if you need us to add a second email, that Parent Reps are notified ASAP. Please check your email OFTEN.

When the meet entries are sent, it is up to parents and swimmers to ensure the correct entries have been made and notify us ASAP if there is a mistake. Specific times for events are not listed, so the coach can't 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., will be sent by email.

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 who 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. 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 then proceed to the marshalling area. They will check in at the marshalling desk and 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 has 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 or a digital version will be available, these will indicate the order of events for the day. Meet Mobile is an App you can purchase that will also provide approximate times and race results.

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/snacks throughout the day. Some meets have a warm-up/cool-down pool available. Have your swimmer speak to their coaches about appropriate times to access this pool should it be available.

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 inform the head coach and will review with them what the reason was for the DQ and then the coach will 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
- Getting out of the water too early after a race

Getting DQ'd is a common and normal part of the learning process. Encourage your child to see DQs as a learning opportunity and going through them is their path to success.

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 swimsuits 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 (the 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 or 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 Regionals, 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 training and other swim meets, attitude, and team spirit. The regional relays will be provided a few days prior to Regionals, but final decisions on some relays may be made at 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 rep.

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 rep 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.

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

- Become a stroke and turn judge or starting official and officiate at swim meets,
- Time at swim meets,
- Take the CBSC tent to all swim meets and bring the tent home after each swim meet
- 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,
- Assist with the duty assigned to our region for the Provincial Swim Meet

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 emailed out to the parent group typically the day before the meet and 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 3rd 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. 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 meets of the season for highly competitive swimmers are the BCSSA Regional Championships and the BCSSA Provincial Championships, also known as "Regionals" and "Provincials." In order to be able to swim at Provincials, swimmers must qualify at Regionals -a top three finish, Qualifier spot, Wild Card spot and PQT (provincial qualifier time) are all pathways to Provincials. Talk to your coaches and the Parent Rep for more information.