
Squamish Pirates Swim Club
Athlete and Parent Guide
2012-2013 Season





Squamish Pirates Swim Club Athlete and Parent Guide

Congratulations and welcome to the Squamish Pirates Summer Swim Club!

The information in this package is offered to assist new and previous swim club members in the transition from the winter maintenance schedule to summer training and racing season.

ORGANIZATION

The British Columbia Summer Swimming Association (BCSSA) is a provincial body overseeing the distinct sport of summer swimming. BCSSA is separate from the other governing body of SWIMBC, which oversees the operations of the winter swim club program.

The Squamish Pirates Swim Club is insured and sanctioned under the BCSSA umbrella. Each region hosts meets with all of the regional members with a Regional Championship in the first week of August. The end of the season draws all of the Provincial Qualifying teams from around the province to compete in the BC Provincial Summer Swimming Championships, also in August. The BCSSA trains all officials, supports various executive functions and provides guidance to member clubs in the Province of BC. The Squamish Pirates Swim Club is a non-profit organization run by parent volunteers.

GENERAL PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes. They develop self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to deal with defeat while becoming healthy and physically fit.

As a parent your main responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment for your child to train. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue with their swimming. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, and by coming to meets. Parents serve as role models and their children often emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive models by showing good sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates.

Parents are responsible for:

1. Getting your child to practice on time (15 minutes before official start time so the your child can warm up)
2. Making sure your child is prepared to practice (suit, cap, goggles and fed properly)
3. Arriving to swim meets on time and remaining with your child at the event.
4. Volunteering as requested by the host club of the swim meet. All the officials you see at a swim meet are volunteers. Volunteering at meets ensures smooth and timely running.



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5. Leaving the coaching to the coaches. The pool deck and coaches area at a swim meet are for the coaches and swimmers only. Schedule times away from the pool deck to discuss your child's progress.

6. Participating in social functions organized by the club. These events and fundraisers exist to promote friendship and raise monies for the club.

7. Promoting fundraising activities organized by the club. The simple activities help offset the cost of registration, pool rentals and keep our equipment up to date.

The best way to help a child achieve their goals and reduce the fear of something new or failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one remember that they are still learning. Encourage their efforts and point out the things they did well. As long as they gave their best effort, you should make them feel like a winner.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SWIMMER

Each swimmer is responsible for:

1. Arriving to practices on time, prepared to swim. Make sure you take care of (and don't lose!) your swimsuit, cap and goggles.
2. Working to the best of your ability to improve your skills.
3. Showing respect to coaches, other swimmers, officials and pool staff.
4. Encouraging other team members to accomplish their goals and congratulating them when they do.



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LET THE COACHES...COACH

Our coaches are well trained and are encouraged to obtain NCCP (National Coach Training Program) qualifications. These coaches have years of expertise and also swam when they were younger. They understand the highs and lows of competing. Your child's swimming development is in very good hands.

The summer practice schedule is far more rigorous than the two-hour practice limit that summer swim club members must abide by in the winter months. Your child does not have to attend every practice although more practice now means greater gains later. It is best to try to find a balance between hard work and commitment to a goal and enjoying the swim club experience.

PRACTICES

Please attend practices to get a feel for what your child is doing and how a practice is run. Check out the club's bulletin board for information regarding meets and fundraisers. Socializing with other swim parents is an excellent way to gain more information about the season but please refrain from gossiping and discussing other swimmers or the coaches.

Please do not walk on deck and talk with your child during practice. Allow the coach to deal with any difficulties your child may encounter in a practice in a manner that suits the child and their individual needs. If you wish to speak with a coach, an appointment can be arranged with the coach or through a Parent Volunteer- Coaches liaison.

THE EQUIPMENT BASICS

Every swimmer needs a suit, goggles, swim cap and water bottle at every practice and meet. A girl's suit should feature a high neckline and comfortable back. For boys the suit should be a brief or 'jammer'.

It is highly recommended to have two suits for a child to use. Otherwise, on the day of a meet or on your way to the meet you will discover that your child has left the suit at home or you have left it in the wash! Many swimmers like to have a training suit (a cheaper poly blend suit for practices) and a racing suit (a lycra blend suit that apparently makes them faster.)

Purchase goggles to fit your child's eyes and head. The coaches will help them to adjust the goggles and teach them how to dive so that the goggles stay over their eyes. The rule of forgotten or lost suits also applies to goggles.

Also needed is a swim cap. Not only do they protect hair from chlorine but also coaches look for our distinctive pirate cap when swimmers climb onto the starting blocks. Swim meets are noisy and move rapidly and sometimes it is the only way a coach can tell if one of his or her swimmers is about to race. Basic latex swim caps are \$5.00 and silicone caps that are thicker but a little easier to pull over longer hair are \$15.00.



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You can purchase some equipment through the club and another great resource is Team Aquatic Supplies, 2411 Dollarton Highway., North Vancouver, 604-980-2805, www.team-aquatic.ca

THE SWIM MEET

The summer swim season begins in May with the first meet usually the Squamish Pirates one-day meet the end of May. A schedule of meets can be found online in the spring of each year and there is usually an opportunity to attend a meet each weekend through June/July. We encourage your family to attend as many meets as possible to show support for the team and your child's growth and development in the sport. At minimum we support meets of the other clubs in our region. These clubs are the North Shore Winter Club (NSWC), Vancouver Vikings, North Vancouver Cruisers and the Vancouver Super Sharks.

For your child the swim season can end in one of two ways:

Regional's- usually the first weekend in August and for most swimmers, this is the big meet they've been working towards. If your child is an 'A' swimmer they may qualify for Provincials.

Provincials- usually held the third week of August.

The Pirate team usually has a canopy/tent area to hang out; here are some items to bring for you and your child:

Your Swimmer:

- A bag stuffed with swimming gear and additional warm clothing.
- A sleeping bag and pillow to lounge in/on
- Pack light snacks and drinks for your swimmer. Most meets have breakfast, lunch and dinner menus but the coaches do not always approve the fare.
- Bring toys, games and other creative things for your child and their friends to play.

There is a lot of waiting between events at swim meets and this is a good time for the swimmers to play and relax with one another.

You:

- A camping chair
- Book/Magazine
- Water
- Blanket
- Change of clothes as indoor pools can be extremely warm and outdoor pools can change temperature quickly.



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For the group:

If you have the following it helps to bring it along for the tent/hang out area:

- Tarp
- Pop up Canopy

SWIMMING RULES

The four competitive strokes are Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Butterfly. Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances for each age group and classification.

Distances usually range from 25 m (1 length) to 200 m (8 lengths). Summer swimming league pools are all 25 metres long and typically have six- eight lanes for competitors. Swimmers are placed in age categories according to their birthdays and can be in a 'division' for one or two seasons.

Freestyle Events: In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke he/she wishes. The usual stroke is the front crawl, alternate overhand motion of the arms and an alternating up and down flutter kick. Actually, any stroke can be performed in the freestyle as long as the swimmer does not pull themselves forward on the lane ropes or use their feet on the bottom of the pool.

Individual Medley: commonly known as the 'I.M' features all four strokes. In the I.M the swimmer begins with the Butterfly then changes after one-fourth of the race to Backstroke, then Breaststroke and finally freestyle.

Medley Relay: The medley relay is made up of four teammates who all take a turn with one stroke. In this instance the medley starts with the swimmer in the water for the Backstroke, then Breaststroke, then Butterfly and Freestyle.

There will be a time (or two...) where your child will be disqualified (DQ'd) from their race. In this event we ask you to be supportive rather than critical. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A DQ alerts the swimmer and the coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke needs to be corrected. They should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in schoolwork. The DQ is necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, the coach, and the parent can also keep it a positive experience for the DQ'd swimmer.



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OFFICIALS AND POSITIONS

Officials are present at all competitions to implement the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before getting certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

Timers- operate timing devices (watches or automatic timing systems) and record the official time for the swimmer in that lane.

Stroke and Turn Judges- observe the swimmer's form from each end of the pool, as well as the sides, ensuring that turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.

Clerk of the Course- arranges the swimmers in their proper heats and lanes.

Starter- assumes control of the swimmers from the referee, directs them to "take your mark", and sees that no swimmer is in motion prior to giving the start signal.

Referee- has overall authority and control of the competition, ensuring that: all the rules are followed.

The logistics of swimming and expectations can take some time to learn, don't hesitate to ask questions if you don't understand something. For further information you may check the website and/or bulletin board located just outside of the pool area. Many parents are around the pool deck during practices and would be happy to answer your questions.