

How to Start a Club

STARTING A COMPETITIVE SUMMER SWIM CLUB

A competitive swimming club will provide the community's youth with a healthy activity, in an atmosphere that is friendly and enjoyable.

A competitive swimming club requires :

- A 25 metre or yard (preferably six or eight lane) pool;
- Youth who love to swim;
- A coach;
- Lots of parents who are willing to devote time to the sport.

It is important to understand that competitive swimming is truly a family affair and community affair. Families and groups of families travel to meets together, you have time to sit back and relax around the pool, and you get time to socialize with other family member from other communities. Swimmers develop lasting friendships with their fellow competitors.

TO GET STARTED:

HOLD A MEETING of interested adults; (probably the parents of future swimming club members).

Advertise your meeting through:

- existing swimming programs (Red Cross, YMCA, Municipal Summer Swimming Programs, etc.)
- local recreation department
- schools
- civic centres
- other places where youth or their parents are apt to be
- community service space on your local radio/TV/newspaper
- word-of-mouth

Prepare your agenda. It may include:

- coaching availability (volunteer or paid)
- available pool time (hours and cost)
- available funding assistance (service clubs, Provincial Regional Offices, etc.)
- fund-raising possibilities - contact other clubs to see what they do.
- selection of an "action committee" to contact Swim Saskatchewan or the Summer Swimming Executive for guidelines in proceeding with organizational plans.
- plans for a visit to the nearest existing competitive swimming club

PREPARE A BUDGET

Income:

- Swimmer fees
- Fund-raising activities
 - Swimathon/Citrus sales/ Raffles/ Bingo/ ????
 - Municipal recreation authority (TIP Grants)
 - Sponsoring club or agency (Kinsmen, Lions)
 - Corporate Sponsors

Expenses:

- Pool rental - Note: for swimmers to develop into strong swimmers, they should have 1 to 2 hours of training time per day, at least 4 days per week
- Equipment (flutter boards, pace-clock, lane-ropes, etc)
- Coaching costs (salary, travel expenses, etc.)
- Club membership with Swim Saskatchewan (\$33/year)
- Swimmer membership with Swim Saskatchewan (\$11/swimmer/year)

Club Policy and Procedures manual

Your club should establish a Club Manual outlining its Executive responsibilities and Coaches' responsibilities. Also, having a Club Manual helps to ensure the continuity of the club when members of the executive leave the club. It would also help to clarify what is expected of the Coaches and each member of the Executive and results in a more effective club. Again help is available from the Summer Swimming Executive and from other clubs.

FIND A COACH.

- Check for availability of local swimming coaches willing to work with a new club and having appropriate coaching certification (NCCP - National Coaching Certification Program) or someone willing to obtain the same. Someone already involved in aquatics (lifeguard, swim instructors, etc.) may be likely candidates.
- All clubs should have at least one coach with a NCCP Level One certification. Courses are generally available each spring.
- Contact - Swim Saskatchewan Inc.
- Check out the "I Can Swim" Program. I CAN SWIM and I CAN SWIM FAST are for anyone who wants to swim well. The programs focus on the learner, and teachers in both programs are required to be evaluated, through a new teacher certification process, on the basis of their teaching competence. This program is structured so an experienced swimmer over 14 can deliver the program, working under close supervision and assistance of parents.
- Many Summer Clubs have volunteer coaches, who work with the swimmers on a rotational basis. For example, some coaches may work the morning session, while another coach works with them in the evening.
- Coaches responsibilities vary greatly from club to club - depends on the level of compensation the coaches get. Nipawin, Kindersley and Watrous depend on volunteer coaches, most other clubs hire coaches - generally students. Coaches compensation are from \$15/hr and \$100/meet to cover coaches' mileage and expenses to reimbursement of the coach's expenses.

SCHEDULE ANOTHER MEETING with those at the original meeting and any others who are now interested, plus representation from the Summer Swimming Executive, representation from any local sponsoring agencies, and representatives from the local club you've visited.

Agenda:

- determine likely number of team members
- present proposed budget, swimmer fees, swimmer's fund-raising responsibilities
- present a possible pool schedule
- present possible coaching arrangement
- have presentation from Swim Saskatchewan or the Summer Swimming Executive delegation
- select a club name and logo (check that there is no conflict with existing teams)

BEGIN TRAINING:

- Head Coach and Team Manager sets up a practice schedule (morning and evenings), establish communications system with swimmers and parents (phone committee, Newsletter, etc.).
- While the swimmers and coaches get to work, it is time to start training the parents as swimming officials; each meet requires between 35 and 40 adults on check and in the office to run a competition. Other clubs will more be willing to assist and officiating clinics can be set up in your area.

BEGIN COMPETING:

- Competitions occur each week-end beginning in late June and winds-up with the North and South semi-finals on the August long week-end. Provincial finals are the following weekend. See Swim Saskatchewan's web page (www3.sk.sympatico.ca/swimsask) Summer Swimming current years meet schedule or contact a member of the Summer Swimming Executive listed below.
- Not all swimmers need to attend any competitive meets, however to attend the provincial semifinal, a swimmer must compete in at least one other meet. The top six swimmers in each event at the semifinal are eligible to compete in that event at the provincial finals.
- Swimmers should compete as much as possible. With regular training, major improvement in your swimmers occurs very quickly! **This is the swimmer's reward!** Competition shows them how much they improved. Encourage them, especially when they don't do well the first time or two. Also, don't let your swimmer get discouraged at they can't keep up swimmers with more experienced swimmers.
- Swimmers who do swim in a couple of swim meet will train harder to improve their strokes.

ASK FOR HELP!

From the Swim Saskatchewan Office, Summer Swimming Executive Members, or established club members. All will be more than willing to assist a new club in becoming involved in our provincial activities!

Promoting Summer Swimming in Your Community and neighbouring communities.

- send letters home from school - breakdown the cost of registration to so much per hour of swimming. For example: \$65/5 hours/week/8 weeks equals \$1.63 per hour and compare it to the cost of swimming lessons. Letter should appeal to kids and parents.
- allow one week free coaching at the beginning of the year and have a mini meet at the end of the week - Note: if the child is not registered with Swim Sask, he/she is not covered by the Swim Sask insurance.

- encourage swimmers to bring a friend during the first week.
 - coordinate speed swimming with school phys-ed classes - have swim club coaches put on a training session during school program -
 - spread the club responsibilities around - the more people involved with running the club, the more ideas and sense of responsibility to the club.
 - Use your local newspapers to advertize your club by giving them competitors results to publish.
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Level 1: Designed for coaches of beginning competitive swimmers.

Coaches with NCCP Level 1 Certification are competent in:

- applying knowledge of the needs and characteristics of beginning competitive swimmers, particularly the 12 and under swimmer
- communicating effectively with swimmers, parents and the larger swimming community
- teaching the skills of competitive swimming in a learner-centered manner
- promoting Fair Play
- designing flexibility and body weight exercise programs
- guiding swimmers in healthy eating during and before competition
- analyzing and refining a swimmer's performance through observation
- applying the principles of aerobic training
- planning, conducting and evaluating practices within the context of seasonal goals

Prerequisites for:

- *Theory 1*: At least 16 years of age
- *Technical 1*: At least 16 years of age; Level 1 Theory is strongly recommended
- *Practical 1*: Level 1 Theory or equivalent and Level 1 Technical

Requirements for Level 1 Certification

- *Theory 1*: 14 hour course (or approved equivalent)
 - *Technical 1*: 20 hour course; completion of pre-course and course workbook
 - *Practical 1*: practical learning guide and 35 hours of coaching experience
 - *OR* an Integrated Course: 69 hours; workbooks, course, learning guide, coaching experience
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Level 2: Designed for coaches of developing competitive swimmers

Coaches with NCCP Level 2 Certification are competent in:

- applying knowledge of the needs and characteristics of developing competitive swimmers, particularly the early adolescent swimmer
- demonstrating leadership skills including assertive communication and conflict resolution
- applying goal setting to increase a swimmer's motivation and self determination

- assisting swimmers develop strategies to meet their daily nutritional needs
- applying knowledge of muscular development to strength training for swimmers
- analyzing, teaching and refining swimming strokes and skills using performance measures and experiential coaching
- applying the principles of anaerobic training
- designing, implementing and monitoring a seasonal plan

Prerequisites for:

- *Theory 2*: Level 1 Theory or approved equivalent
- *Technical 2*: Level 1 Certification (and Update if certification was more than five years ago) and Level 2 Theory or approved equivalent
- *Practical 2*: Level 2 Theory or equivalent and Level 2 Technical

Requirements for Level 2 Certification

- *Level 1 Certification*
- *Theory 2*: 24 hour course (or approved equivalent)
- *Technical 2*: 20 hour course; completion of pre-course and course workbooks
- *Practical 2*: practical learning guide and 200 hours of coaching experience of which 100 hours can be retroactive

General Information about Swim meets

1. Event - Each swimmer swims in an age category, against others of the same sex, for a set distance and in a certain stroke. For example: Event #1 may be "13 & 14 yr. girls - 100 meter freestyle."
2. The age categories are (as of May 1):
 - 8 & under
 - 9 & 10
 - 11 & 12
 - 13 & 14
 - 17 & under
 - open
3. Strokes - there are four competitive strokes:
 - freestyle - the swimmer can do anything except touch the bottom; usually front crawl is used because it is fast.
 - butterfly - arms swing forward simultaneously over the top of the water and pull simultaneously back under the water and both legs kick together up and down.
 - breaststroke - arms slide forward under the water and pull under the water, and the kick is a form of "frog-kick".
 - backstroke - swimmer must be on back except when turning, usually back crawl because that is fastest.
 - I.M. - individual medley - ¼ of the distance is swum in each stroke in order of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.
 - freestyle relay - four-member team; each team member swim ¼ of the distance, any stroke s(he) wishes.
 - medley relay - each team member swims one of the four strokes in order of backstroke, breast stroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

4. **Swim Meet** - where several clubs come together to compete. The host club selects the events to fill in a day. Individuals compete in various races for individual and team awards. Swim meets are an important part of the Swim Club Program and are necessary if a swimmer is going to show improvement.
5. **Relay Teams** - At all regular swim meets, the coaches should try to enter all swimmers in as many relays as possible.

SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE SWIMMERS

As summer approaches and days get longer, some feel that they should be up all night. Please remember the body needs sleep to develop and remain in top physical condition. Please get to bed early or take a nap during the day.

No special diet is required for athletes. Follow a well-balanced diet, as outlined in the Canadian Food Guide. Extra carbohydrates (bread, pastas, potatoes etc.) and low fat foods are recommended for the day or two before a meet. Sugar and protein do not add anything to a swimmer's performance. Sugar (including honey, chocolate bars, etc.) before competing or training can over stimulate the blood, so that at the time to perform, there is actually below normal food energy in the blood.

Recommended snack foods are: fruit, fruit yogurt, crackers and cheese, muffins (low in sugar), bagels, small boxes of cereal, etc. It is recommended to pack a lunch and to eat small amount throughout the day as oppose to eating a single large meal. Dairy products or drinking milk is not recommended during the swim meet. Milk produces coats the throat and inhibits breathing during the races.

It is most **important to drink lots of water**. The body cannot generate energy without an adequate supply of water. On a hot windy Saskatchewan day you can sweat without knowing it.

Bring a sleeping bag, sweats, two towels, hats, sun screen, rain gear, bathing caps, goggles, etc. It may be 35 degrees or 5 degrees. A lot of time is spent out of the water. It is important to pack extras because on cold days, anything that gets wet will not dry for you to use again.

It is a good idea for your club to have a tarp to put up at meets. The tarp is for the swimmers to lie down and relax and is the usual spot for the swimmers to stay between swims. However, it is permissible and encouraged to visit other teams and get to know new people. Just be sure to listen for your races so that you do not miss them. Please show good behaviour, and maintain music levels at a level where you do not disturb other people.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME AT THE MEET.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE NUMBER ONE TO HAVE FUN!

TRY TO SWIM WELL FOR YOU RATHER THAN LOOKING AT YOUR STANDINGS COMPARED TO OTHERS.

THERE ARE LOTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO MEET AND HAVE FUN WITH AT MEETS. IF YOU SWIM FOR SEVERAL YEARS, ONE OF THE BEST PARTS IS SEEING OLD FRIENDS FROM OTHER YEARS.