

Peace River Wahoos Winter Swim Club Parent Guide

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This guide is a start to your education about competitive swimming and the Winter Swim Club. It outlines what the Peace River Winter Swim Club represents, club programs, policies and the responsibilities of our members.

Your swim coach is an important resource. Questions or concerns should be directed to your Child's coach. They can be contacted after practice or you can e-mail questions to wahoosswimming@gmail.com. Parents should not discuss matters with the coach on the pool deck during practices or competitions.

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SECTION 1: GETTING YOUR FEET WET

(1.1) Welcome to Competitive Swimming

We would like to welcome you to the exciting world of swimming. Your child has become a member of one of Canada's largest and most organized youth sports.

The sport of swimming has many benefits, including the people you and your child will meet. The camaraderie among swimmers is unique, with many swimming buddies becoming lifelong friends. In addition to being around fine people, swimming provides one of the most beneficial forms of exercise for cardiovascular and overall fitness. Swimming is also relatively injury free and can be enjoyed throughout one's entire life.

Perhaps the greatest benefits of participating in an organized swim program are the life skills your child will develop. These skills include time management, organization skills, self-discipline and sportsmanship. Your child will reap the benefits of swimming long after his/her participation in competitive swimming ends.

Age group swimming is fun, exciting, and rewarding. In the first few years, the focus is on stroke development and learning competitive swimming basics. Many children improve rapidly and it is not unusual to see tremendous growth in these first few years. It is often difficult to avoid the tendency to push young athletes at this stage. It is important to remember that each child will develop at their own rate. Girls, who mature sooner than boys, can often start heavier training younger. Swimming should be fun and relatively pressure free, especially at the younger levels. As your child progresses, continual training and competition challenges are provided to enhance their development in the sport of swimming.

While not every swimmer will become a world record holder, our club believes every swimmer should be encouraged to dream of reaching their own Olympics. Many Olympians didn't look like much at age 10 or 14, but they had a dream! Our club and your involvement in it can help the swimmers achieve their goals. You may soon find yourself cheering at competitions, timing on pool deck, participating in executive decisions, or becoming involved as a committee member. Whatever the role, your child's experience in swimming has a lot to do with your positive support. Please feel free to ask questions. We all have the same goal: to provide our children with the best possible swimming experience.

(1.2) The Sport of Swimming

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Your swimmer will learn all four strokes as he/she progresses through the program. They will begin with instruction that is practiced over small distances. As their skill level increases, so will distances and endurance.

FREESTYLE: The swimmer may swim any stroke she/he wishes. The usual stroke is the front crawl. This stroke is characterized by alternate overhead motion of the arms and an alternating up and down flutter kick. The freestyle is swum over 50, 100, 200, 400 and 800-meter distances.

BACKSTROKE: The swimmer must stay on their back. The stroke is an alternating

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motion of the arms. At each turn, a swimmer will roll onto their front, and is allowed one arm stroke and then performs a tumble turn. At each turn the swimmer must touch the wall with some part of their body. After the turn, the swimmer pushes off the wall on their back. Swimmers must surface within 15 meters after the start of the race and after each turn. Backstroke race distances are 50, 100, and 200 meters.

BREASTSTROKE: Perhaps one of the most difficult strokes to master, the breaststroke requires simultaneous movement of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pushed forward from the breast, on or under of the water and brought backward in the propulsive stage of the stroke, simultaneously. The kick is a synchronous thrust of the legs called a frog or breaststroke kick. No flutter or dolphin kick is allowed. At each turn, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands at the same time. Breaststroke race distances are 50, 100 and 200 meters.

BUTTERFLY: This is the most beautiful and physically demanding stroke. The butterfly features the simultaneous overhead stroke of the arms combined with the dolphin kick. In the dolphin kick both legs move up and down together. No flutter kicking is allowed. Swimmers must surface within 15 meters after the start and after each turn. Learning the timing is the most difficult part of this stroke. The butterfly was developed in the 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke and became an Olympic event in 1956. It is swum in 50, 100, and 200 meters.

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY: Commonly referred to as the IM, this event features all four strokes. The swimmer begins with the butterfly and then changes to backstroke. At the halfway mark the stroke changes to the breaststroke, followed by freestyle at the mark. The IM is swum in 200 and 400-meter distances.

MEDLEY RELAY: This involves all four strokes, with each member of the team being responsible for one stroke. The first swimmer does backstroke, followed by the breaststroke, butterfly and finally freestyle. The medley relay is 200 or 400-meter total distance.

FREESTYLE RELAY: This event involves a team of four, each swimming the distance in freestyle. Freestyle relay distances are 200, 400 or 800-meter (national competitions only).

(1.3) Swim Season

The Peace River Winter Swim Club swim year runs from the first part of October to the end of April of each year. Most swimmers attend their last competition in May.

(1.4) Training

Your swimmer will be registered into a level that suits his/her abilities and age and will be under the direction of a coach. The schedule of regular practice days and times can be found on the club's website at <https://peaceriverswimming.org/practice-schedule>. It is expected your child will get to their respective practice, 10-15 minutes early, so that they can be ready prior to the scheduled start time with all their swimming gear.

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Please remember to inform the coach of a swimmer's absence from practice, in advance of the situation, whenever possible.

Ensure that your swimmer has warm clothing to wear home after practice. A toque is an important aid in the winter. Swimmers need a snack (carbohydrates, i.e. breads and fruits) before practice and a snack awaiting them after practice. Healthy snacks perk up a swimmer and keep them satisfied longer than junk food!

(1.5) Equipment to Get Started

Swimmers will need the following at each practice session:

SWIMSUIT: All swimmers will need a training swimsuit. Have your swimmer rinse out their bathing suit in cold water, after each practice, to keep it lasting a bit longer. Chlorinated pool water is hard on the fabric. Never put the suit in the dryer as the heat will damage the Lycra. Polyester swimsuits are much more tolerant of chlorine, and therefore tend to last longer than Lycra ones. Polyester swimsuits are often purchased as training suits but can be used for racing. Swimsuits are sized for swimmers and are part of the registration fee.

CAP: A cap will keep hair out of the swimmer's eyes and will reduce water resistance. It also protects hair from chlorine damage. Swim caps with the Club's logo are available for purchase from the club.

GOGGLES: Goggles are worn by swimmers to enhance vision and protect their eyes from the effects of the chemicals in the water. To fit a pair of goggles, press the eyepieces to the eyes without the strap. There should be momentary suction suggesting that the shape of the eyepiece fits the shape of the swimmer's eyes.

TOWEL: Most swimmers prefer a large thick beach towel.

WATER BOTTLE: Make sure your swimmer takes a water bottle to every practice as it is important they stay hydrated.

**TO EASE THE FRUSTRATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT OF LOSING EQUIPMENT
REMEMBER: LABEL EVERYTHING WITH PERMANENT INK (NAME & PHONE #)**

SECTION 2: PEACE RIVER WINTER SWIM CLUB

(2.1) Mission Statement

The Peace River Winter Swim Club is dedicated to providing instruction in basic speed-swimming, to providing an opportunity for each swimmer to develop these skills to the maximum of his or her mental and physical capabilities, and to promoting excellence in competitive swimming.

(2.2) Club Philosophy

The Peace River Winter Swim Club is an age group club that wishes to provide all interested children the opportunity to participate in speed-swimming. The Club believes that

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parents are an integral part of the swim program and recognizes the importance of parental participation.

(2.3) Guiding Principles

The Peace River Winter Swim Club recognizes the individual worth of each swimmer regardless of the level of ability or commitment.

The Peace River Winter Swim Club recognizes that our swimmers are children who are swimming for various reasons at various levels of commitment.

The Peace River Winter Swim Club encourages participation through reward rather than punishment.

The Peace River Winter Swim Club believes that swimming should be enjoyable. While swimmers are at practice to work hard, they should also have fun.

The Peace River Winter Swim Club believes that technical instruction is an important part of any swim program, and that all swimmers benefit from stroke correction.

(2.4) Club Objectives

To provide a speed-swimming program of developmental training which will enable every swimmer in the Club to develop to the full extent of his or her level of interest, commitment and ability. To promote the amateur sport of competitive swimming through the cooperation of Swim Alberta and other organizations and individuals with similar objectives. To promote good sportsmanship, leadership and character.

(2.5) Club Structure

The Peace River Winter Swim Club is a non-profit organization operated under the direction of a volunteer executive. The club's competitive programs are directed by our Head Coach. The Head Coach is responsible for guiding the coaching staff. Administration, policy, and operational activities supporting the programs are planned and carried out under the direction of the volunteer executive. The ongoing success of our Club depends on the team work, dedication and efforts of all involved.

The Peace River Winter Swim Club is identified with the colors black and blue. Swimmers are expected to wear team clothing and colors when representing the Club. This builds team spirit and makes swimmers proud of the club they are associated with. Parents are invited to participate as well.

(2.6) Club Swim Groups

To get more information on the Club Swim Groups, please see the website at <https://peaceriverswimming.org/swim-groups>

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To get more information on when the groups swim schedule, please see the website at <https://peaceriverswimming.org/practice-schedule>

LEARN TO SWIM 3: Your child will swim 30 minutes, 3 times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). These kids must be in grade 1 or above and have some comfort in the water. We won't spend time trying to get them to put their faces in the water or blowing bubbles. These kids will be encouraged to participate in our home swim meet. That will be the only meet they are able to participate in due to insurance coverage. The children are in a 4:1 child/coach ratio and by the end of the first session you will be amazed at their progress.

LEARN TO SWIM 2: Your child will swim 40 minutes, 3 times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). These kids will be encouraged to participate in our home swim meet. That will be the only meet they are able to participate in due to insurance coverage. The children are in a 6:1 child/coach ratio and as with the group above, by the end of the first session you will be amazed at their progress.

LEARN TO SWIM 1: Your child will swim 50 minutes, 3 times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). These kids will be encouraged to participate in our home swim meet. That will be the only meet they are able to participate in due to insurance coverage. The children are in a 6:1 child/coach ratio also.

LEARN TO SWIM 1: (Competitive) This is the same group as the one above, however, an additional fee has been paid so that the necessary insurance coverage is obtained to allow the swimmer to participate in additional swim meets.

Competitive Program

All remaining swim groups are part of a competitive program. This means the insurance fee has been paid to Swim Alberta to allow the swimmers to participate in additional swim meets. It is expected for swimmers in these groups to participate in the home swim meet. These kids are encouraged to attend additional meets as they are a great experience and a lot of fun, but are never forced or made to feel bad if they don't attend.

DEVELOPMENT 2: Your child will swim 90 minutes, 3 times a week. Your child must be able to swim the WIDTH of the pool once to enter this level. By the end of the season this group will be diving from the starting blocks and doing 50M or even 100M events.

DEVELOPMENT 1: Your child will swim 90 minutes, 3 times a week. This group is for older and more experienced swimmers than those in Development 1.

AGE GROUP 2: Your child will swim 2 hours, 4 times a week. This is for our more advanced swimmers who ideally should attend 3-4 meets over the season.

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AGE GROUP 1: Your child will swim 2 hours, 5 times with an optional training session 1 morning a week for 90 minutes. This is where the really competitive kids swim. They are solid swimmers working on improving their times. Their swim techniques are well established and these children are focusing on speed at this level.

(2.7) Registration

Registration for returning members occurs at mid-June. New swimmer registration occurs during the summer up to the start of the season. The registration package will be emailed as well as available on the Club's website (<https://peaceriverswimming.org/swim-groups>)

Each competitive swimmer must be registered with Swim Alberta, the provincial governing body for swimming. The annual fee as set by Swim Alberta is included in the registration fee.

All forms must be filled out and signed and fees paid before your child can be properly registered and enter the pool to start the swim season.

SECTION 3: SWIM CLUB OPERATIONS

(3.1) Funding the Swim Club

Raising sufficient money to support a swim club is a continual challenge. Club fees cover approximately half of the expenses. To supplement revenue from fees, the Club participates in a variety of fundraisers which may include a Casino (once every 3 years), Swim-a-thon and hosting swim meets. Support of these endeavors is part of your membership commitment. Fundraising is vital as a source of revenue to our club.

Families are responsible for payment in full of registration fees, fundraising commitments, swim meet costs (including swim meet fees, transportation, meals and accommodation).

Cheques should be made payable to the Peace River Winter Swim Club. Your co-operation in making prompt payments will help your club operate efficiently. An NSF fee of \$30.00 will be applied to any returned cheques.

Alternatively, the club accepts e-transfers sent to prwahoosexec@gmail.com.

(3.2) Fees

Fees are used to pay pool rental costs, salaries, administrative costs and travel costs for coaches. The Club executive will consider fee adjustments for sick or injured swimmers. These situations will be considered on a case by case basis. Fees will not be reduced for swimmers away on vacation or choosing not to attend all practices for their group. The Club's refund policy can be found on the website.

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(3.3) Swim Meet Fees

Swim meet entry fees are based on the number of events the swimmer is entered into, and entry fees vary between meets, as set by the hosting club. Payment for swim meet fees are to be made to the Peace River Winter Swim Club no later than the Wednesday before the meet. The Club forwards full payment to the hosting club. Fees are non-refundable even if the swimmer decides not to swim or is sick, as the hosting club will not refund the fee. The Club pays the entry fees for relays.

(3.4) Attendance

To ensure the continued growth and survival of the club, it is very important that swimmers attend the majority of practices and show commitment to the club. If a swimmer is absent greater than 50% of the season, they will not have a secure spot for the following season as they will not be permitted to register with the other returning swimmers. They will be permitted to register when new families do and will be granted a spot if there remains sufficient space. The executive has discretion to make allowances for unusual circumstances.

(3.5) Withdrawal

It is your responsibility to inform the Treasurer and Registrar, in writing (or via E-mail), of your intention to withdraw your swimmer. Partial refund of fees may be considered by the current executive as per the current refund policy.

(3.6) Casinos

Our club applies as a society to work a casino in Grande Prairie in return for a large sum of money from the Alberta Lotteries Board. The waiting list of groups wanting to participate in this is very long. In the past we have received approximately \$30,000 which is how we are able to keep our fees much lower than most of the larger city clubs. It is important as many families as possible participate in this fundraising event.

(3.7) Swim-a-thon

Swim Alberta conducts a swim-a-thon program each year. This is a required event for swimmers to participate in as it is one of our major fundraisers. Learn to Swim swimmers will participate on that day during their regular practice time but are not required to collect pledges/donations, however, they are encouraged to do so if willing. Swim Alberta provides an online platform for swimmers to collect pledges/donations online. The Swim-a-thon coordinator will provide additional information on when the event will occur and how to register closer to the date of the event. On the day of the Swim-a-thon, swimmers will swim 200 lengths, or for two hours, whichever comes first. Parent volunteers are required at this event to count laps.

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(3.8) Other Fundraising

The Club is always looking for ways to keep registration fees down and pay for its expenses through fundraising. Members will be advised of upcoming fundraising opportunities and families are required to participate in at least three activities. If members cannot or do not wish to participate, volunteer cheques will be deposited by the club. We are also continually looking for sponsors in the business community to provide sponsorship (cash or gifts-in-kind) in hosting swim meets.

(3.9) Club Executive

Executive

The Winter executive meets once a month in the swimming pool activity room or via zoom. If you have a particular item you would like discussed by the executive, please contact the Club President. A parent meeting is held in October or November and the annual general meeting is held in May prior to the awards presentations. A member of each family should attend these two meetings.

President

The President directs the overall policies and affairs of the Club and represents the Club to the Town of Peace River, Swim Alberta and other groups. He/she will provide direction to the Head Coach and will assure that all business of the Club is properly managed by those responsible. The President will call and preside at all general, directors and executive committee meetings. He/she will be an ex officio member of *all* committees of the Board.

Vice President

The Vice President will assist the President with the day to day operations and will assume the role of the President in his/her absence.

Secretary

The Secretary prepares agendas and prepares minutes for all general and directors' meetings. He/she will prepare other correspondence as required and loads all minutes and agendas to the club's Google Drive.

Treasurer

The Treasurer maintains the financial records of the Club. The Treasurer will deposit all incoming monies and pay all of the expenses incurred by the Club, including payroll for the coaching staff.

The Treasurer will prepare up to date financial statements for executive and general membership meetings and at the end of the fiscal year; submits forms as required by the Non-Profit Corporations Act and AGLC. He/she also participates in the preparation of grant applications as required.

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Casino Coordinator

The Casino Coordinator completes all necessary paperwork to complete the Casino application, ensures AGLC requirements are met, positions are filled for shifts and books hotels for the volunteers.

Registrar

The Registrar will ensure all returning and new members are properly registered with the Club for the swim year, and that all swimmers are appropriately and accurately registered with Swim Alberta. He/she will make sure the Club has the required forms and cheques for each swimmer at the time of registration.

Swim Meet Coordinator

The meet manager works with the head coach to plan our home meet and ensure all necessary sanctions are received and approval from Swim Alberta is obtained. He/she will liaise with other swim clubs that have been invited to ensure good attendance at the meet. He/she will work with the Head Coach to ensure that the Dolphin system is functional, secure rental for chairs and tables for foyer, organize food for volunteers and ensure various positions are filled (in conjunction with the Officials Coordinator).

Officials Coordinator

The Officials Coordinator arranges for officials' clinics to be held for members and records and updates the qualifications of the Club members as they attend clinics and officiate at meets. He/she will work with the Swim Meet Coordinator to arrange for all officials at swim meets the Club hosts.

Swim-a-thon Coordinator

The Swim-a-thon Coordinator will organize the annual Swim-a-thon. He/she will set a date for the swim-a-thon in consultation with the Head Coach and the President; ensure pool time is booked for the event; distribute details regarding registration; provide information to members. He/she will also ensure snacks and refreshments are available to all swimmers.

(3.10) Communication to Members

The executive and the coaches are responsible for keeping the membership informed. However, it is important to remember that it is also each family's responsibility to seek information as it is required.

SECTION 4: THE COACH

The coach is your first level of communication in the club. Any questions or concerns should be directed to your swimmer's coach. The coach will direct you to the appropriate person if need be.

The best time to talk with the coach is after practice. It is very important to remember that

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parents should not try to discuss matters with the coach on the pool deck during practice or competition. The swimmers require the coaches' full attention when they are in the water.

If there is a problem or concern that does not reach resolution after consultation with your swimmer's coach, you should approach the Head Coach or the Club President. Please remember that nothing can be done about a problem not discussed, and that a problem will remain your own until it is dealt with.

The coach provides technical expertise... how to swim the strokes properly, how to start, how to turn, how to plan races... The coach provides the training program, to prepare the athlete for physical improvement, while retaining balance for growth and development... The coach is the critic, the person who performs the evaluative function, (because they are the only ones in the program that are professionally prepared to do so). The coach points out strong and weak points.

That is essentially what you need a coach to do most, because nobody else can. Their role is specialized.

As a parent, you can expect the following from your swimmer's coach. Technical expertise... feedback regarding your swimmer... and that he/she cares about your child.

Remember that most coaches view their job as managing the swimming career of the athlete. Not the needs of today only, but what will be done today that will have a positive effect on their career five or ten years from now. Let the swimming coach bring his/her expertise to the client most important to you... your child.

Remember when parents interfere with training and competing, it causes considerable and often insurmountable confusion as to who the swimmer should respect and listen to regarding their swimming. Periodically, come to a practice and watch what your swimmer is doing. Please approach your swimmer's coach with any questions or concerns you may have.

SECTION 5: SWIMMER GUIDELINES

(5.1) Training and Attendance

Swimmer's guidelines are set in place to regulate practice, conduct it in a safe and efficient manner, and maintain good relations with the pool staff. They also help swimmers work together as a team. Swimmers are to be on the pool deck, gear with them and ready to start, prior to the beginning of a practice. Your swimmer should report to the coach, if he/she needs to leave early or if a training session will be missed. Your swimmer should also inform the coach, as soon as possible, of anything that may interfere with training or competition. Regular attendance is important to succeed and achieve goals.

There are rules specific to the pool at which your child swims. These rules are in place to ensure safety, and swimmers are expected to follow them. Diving boards are off limits unless otherwise directed and swimmers should not enter the water until instructions are given by the coach.

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(5.2) Nutrition

In any sport, good nutrition plays a key role in athletic success. Following Canada's Food Guide and placing a little more emphasis on the number of carbohydrates eaten each day will help keep your child healthy and full of energy. A small healthy snack is important for your swimmer to eat before and after training. Swimmers should drink water during the day and during the training session to prevent dehydration.

At swim meets, swimmers should drink more water than usual and eat smart snacks like fruit, crackers, etc. Stay away from high fat/high sugar snacks (i.e. nuts, junk food, cheeses) during a competition. You need to provide the right fuel for racing. Eating out at restaurants is often part of traveling. Educate your swimmer on the right foods to order, such as pasta, chicken, salads, etc. Even in fast food restaurants, good choices can be made.

(5.3) Swimming and School

School and swimming work together and swimmers often improve scholastically. Their swimming schedule will challenge them to be organized. Parents and coaches must help in this respect. This requires communication between all three parties. Increases in training, social events, competitions, and academic expectations come with responsibilities. Initially, the athlete will not handle these without error, but with encouragement, and initiative delegated to your swimmer, success will be realized. Blaming missed assignments and poor grades on swimming schedules is not acceptable. Swimmers are expected to plan ahead and ensure that work is up to date; that studying for exams starts well ahead of the exam date, and that teachers know well in advance the days that will be missed because of swim meets.

Swimming and school sports can work together. Feel free to discuss your swimmer's involvement in school sports with his/her coach.

(5.4) Discipline

A disruptive swimmer takes the coach's time away from other dedicated swimmers. Excessive misbehavior on the part of a swimmer may result in disciplinary action. The coach will warn the swimmer and they may be asked to leave the practice if they disregard the warning. Parents will be informed if a swimmer is asked to leave a practice. If the behavior continues, the dismissal may involve more than one practice. Please see the Discipline Policy on the website.

SECTION 6: PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

(6.1) To Your Club

One of the keys to continued success and development of the Winter Swim Club is participation by the members. The club executive that oversees the day to day operation of the Winter is made up of parent volunteers. There are many opportunities for volunteers to contribute. The club cannot operate effectively without parent volunteers.

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Your swimmer trains and races hard to realize his/her goals. As a parent, you achieve a sense of pride and excitement when these dreams are attained. Volunteering your time will only serve to heighten your sense of pride and excitement.

As a swim parent you need to arrange transportation to ensure your swimmer gets to training and competitions on time. Try to arrange car pools to cut down on your driving time. Parents are encouraged to attend all general meetings. These are informative and give you an opportunity to keep up to date with club activities.

(6.2) To Your Swimmer

You are becoming part of the parent, coach, and athlete triangle. The parent provides emotional support (an anchor) and physical support for the athlete. The coach provides technical expertise that is unavailable anywhere else in the triangle, and to a lesser degree, motivation, in the form of vision, challenge and emotional support. The athlete brings the raw material... the eagerness to learn, to develop, and to respond.

As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. Show your interest by ensuring your swimmer's attendance at practices, by coming to meets and being active in the Club. Parents are not participants on their child's team, but they do contribute to the success of the team. Be enthusiastic and supportive, but remember that your child is the swimmer. Swimmers will establish their goals in conjunction with their coach and make their own progress. Be careful as a parent not to impose your own standard and goals on your swimmer. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of your swimmer's experience is that he/she learns about him/herself while enjoying the sport.

Leave the coaching to the coach. The best way to help a child achieve his/her goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. As your swimmer progresses, mistakes will be made. The value in this for your swimmer is in learning all he/she can from mistakes and then moving forward. Encourage your child's 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.

(6.3) As an Official

Each year the Winter Swim Club hosts a swim meet. Parents are required to officiate at the meet. Families are also encouraged to assist other clubs locally and in the province at other meets. Remember that being an official gives you one of the best seats in the house. Each session at a swim meet requires at least 30 officials. The Official's Coordinator or Swim Meet Coordinator will contact all club members to fill positions prior to a hosted meet. Parents must take clinics prior to officiating at meets. There are different training courses given by certified officials throughout the year to qualify parents as swim officials with duties ranging from timing, to judging strokes and turns, to marshalling swimmers, to acting as starter, to managing the meet. The team official's coordinator will advise families of dates and times of clinics and families are strongly encouraged to attend clinics. It is important to remember that officiating is a requirement of each family, and is NOT optional.

SECTION 7: SWIM MEETS

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Once your child has a good understanding of the competitive strokes and has been introduced to the basics of racing, it will be time for their first swim meet. The coach will determine when your swimmer is ready to compete at a meet.

At the beginning of the season, swimmers are given a tentative meet schedule to assist families in their time and financial planning. This schedule can also be found on the website (<https://peaceriverswimming.org/swim-meets/meet-calendar/>)

(7.1) What is a Swim Meet?

Competition is word that often confuses parents. The way to avoid the confusion, and prepare yourself in a proper philosophical framework for the sport, is to remember that the word competition comes from the old Greek, that translates to STRIVE WITH. And that is exactly what happens in swimming. The swimmers dive in, swim side by side down the pool, each trying to swim faster than the other one. It is not against anyone like football or basketball, it is “with”. TRYING WITH, STRIVING WITH AND COMPETING WITH.

Competition is a means of personal development. Learning about and becoming comfortable in a competitive setting, trying racing strategies, managing stress and dealing with losing and winning all contribute to the development of your child. In a competition, swimmers from the same club, or from more than one club, gather together at the pool. They do what they have been doing in practice, except they go as fast as they can while applying their racing strategies. Competition is a way to measure success of training sessions, and it allows the swimmer to race the time clock, as well as their peers and/or swimmers outside their peer group.

All swimmers are governed by a set of technical rules regarding the starts, strokes, turns and takeovers, to ensure competition is fair to all. These technical rules are established by Swim Alberta. Races begin with a dive start (with the exception of the backstroke). The swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter, who visually checks that all swimmers are still. The race is started with either an electronic tone or a starter pistol. If there is movement before the start, the race will be called back. The swimmers will be warned that if there is another false start, the offending swimmer will be disqualified; OR, a no false start rule may be in effect. This disqualification procedure is in place to ensure a fair start for all swimmers.

Momentum is conserved in races with more than one lap through the use of turns. Quick turns are essential to a good race and many races are won or lost in starts and turns. In all events the swimmer must touch the wall. In the freestyle and backstroke the swimmer may somersault as they reach the wall and touch only with their feet. In breaststroke and butterfly the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands before turning.

Officials are present at all competitions to monitor the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. As part of training, officials attend clinics, pass a written test, and work at meets before being certified.

A swimmer may be disqualified after a race. Disqualification is meant to point out parts of the swimmer's stroke that need to be corrected. Although your swimmer may be very disappointed, it is to be treated as a learning experience. The rules require that reasonable

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effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for disqualification. The decision of the officials is final as far as the swimmer is concerned; however, the coach may question the decision if he/she feels it is warranted.

(7.2) Age Groups and Time Standards

For the purposes of competition, swimmers are placed into age groups. Age groupings at most meets are as follows: 10 and under; 11 and 12; 13 and 14; and 15 and over. Swimmers will compete within their age grouping with the exception of relays when a younger swimmer may move up an age group to allow the Club to enter a relay team.

Each age group in the province has a set of A and B time standards, with A times being the fastest. Any time that is slower than a B time is known as a C time. Swimmers are assigned to heats at swim meets with other swimmers holding similar times, regardless of age. Beginning swimmers are entered into meets as having no times (NT).

(7.3) Before the Competition

The coaches will determine which swimmers are to go to a competition, based on ability and/or qualifying times. The Club uses e-mail, the coaches or direct communication for confirming attendance at swim meets. Please keep these deadlines on your calendar and let the coach or Head Coach know whether or not your swimmer will be attending a meet.

(7.4) Accommodation

Parents are encouraged to travel to swim meets and cheer on our swimmers. Parents are responsible for their own accommodation and are encouraged to discuss this with other parents, if they wish to book in the same hotel.

(7.5) Packing Your Swim Bag for a Meet

To have a successful meet, a well-packed bag is imperative and should include:

- Team or competition swimsuit
- Deck shoes
- Racing cap (plus a spare)
- Goggles (plus a spare adjusted pair)
- Water bottle
- Towels (1-2)
- Personal Money (if not travelling with parents)
- Clothes to keep warm between swims

Swimmers are expected to wear club colors on the pool deck and race in club suits (if not using a competitive swimsuit) and caps (if swimmer races with cap).

(7.6) At the Swim Meet

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Swimmers are required to be on the pool deck prior to the start of each warm-up session. At the warm-up session swimmers will gather for the team meeting and stretching. Following this, swimmers head to the water for the session warm up as directed by the coach. As the racing begins, swimmers will follow the events, reporting to the coach to discuss their next race. Once the race is over, they should again check in with the coach for post-race analysis. It is important to dry off well between races and dress warmly. Don't forget some footwear!

Stay with the team and be ready to support and cheer on your team mates. Attendance for the full meet is expected even if a swimmer is not involved (unless otherwise pre-arranged with the Head Coach). The team needs the support of everyone!

Your swimmer is representing the Peace River Winter Swim Club when they attend a swim meet and a good impression is what the club expects. Everyone is expected to act in a polite and respectful manner. Poor or questionable behavior reflects badly on the Club.

Swimmers are to look after their personal belongings. Don't expect the coaches to pick up after you! Identifying all equipment and clothing with your name and phone number will certainly save money and disappointment in losing items. Garbage MUST be picked up and not left on the pool deck or in the stands. It must be stressed that NO GLASS CONTAINERS are to be used on any pool deck.

(7.7) Hosting Swim Meets

You will be required to assist with the swim meet that our Club hosts. Hosting a swim meet is a fundraiser for the Club and volunteers are extremely important. Most positions to be filled are working as an official. The date of the meet will be announced at the start of the season and is normally held between January and April.

Section 8: GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

Age Group Swimming - Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, and 15 and over. Local meets may also include events for 8 and under.

Block - The starting platform for the beginning of a race.

Cut - Is slang for a qualifying time. It refers to a time standard required for a swimmer to attend a particular meet or event.

De-qualifying - Swimming at a level that is too fast for the qualifying times of a competition.

Distance - Refers to events over 400 meters.

DQ - Is short for Disqualified. Occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind as determined by an official.

Drill - An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke used in training to improve technique.

Dry Land Training - Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming

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performance. Dry land training usually includes stretching, calisthenics, and/or weight training.

False Start - Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start of the race, before the gun/electric tone sounds. The starter will call the swimmers back after the first false start. On the second attempt, any swimmer that advances before the signal, is disqualified. He/she is either called back immediately or given a DQ at the end of the race.

Flags - Backstroke flags are placed 5 meters from each end of the pool. They allow swimmers to execute a turn by indicating the closeness of the approaching wall. From the flags, experienced swimmers know how many strokes it takes them to get to the wall and when to turn.

Goal - A specific time, strategy or tactical achievement a swimmer sets and strives for.

IM - Is slang for Individual Medley, an event in which the swimmer swims all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

Marshalling Area - Used at a swim meet for organizational purpose. It is the area where swimmers must report prior to racing.

Meet Fees - A meet fee applies to each event at a swim meet. There may also be a general fee or surcharge for each swimmer entered in the meet.

Middle Distance - Refers to events of 200 to 400 meters in length.

Negative Split - Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

Official - A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned meet. They include stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers and referees.

Pace Clock - Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice (may also be digital).

Prelims - Slang for preliminaries, also called heats or trials. In these races, swimmers are trying to qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

Q-Time - Is the qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

Racing Suit - This is the team suit worn at swim meets and practice. These are sized to fit snugly so they do not gape or sag during the race.

Relay - Event in which four swimmers compete together as a team.

Sanction - Clubs must receive a permit from Swim Alberta to host a swim meet.

Scratch - To withdraw a swimmer from an event in a competition.

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Seeding - The heat and lane position given to a swimmer based on their entry time.

Split - Is a swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are used to determine if a swimmer is on pace. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official time. In a relay, a split would be the time for one of the four individuals.

Sprint - Refers to the shorter events (50 and 100 meters). It also refers, in training, to swimming as fast as possible for a short distance.

Streamline - The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight (with arms forward of head) and long as it can be.

Time Trial - A time only swim that is not part of a regular meet. A swimmer is racing to achieve a certain qualifying time. It cannot be used to establish records.

Touch Pad - A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

Warm Down - Is a low intensity swim used by a swimmer after the race or main practice set. A warm down rids the body of excess lactic acid and gradually reduces heart and respiration rates.

Warm Up - Is low intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to a race or main practice to get muscles loose and warm. A warm up gradually increases heart and respiration rates and may include some short sprints.

Watches - Stop watches (usually electronic) are used to time swimmers during a competition. When automatic timing equipment is used, stop watches serve as a backup.

Section 9: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please see the Club's website <https://peaceriverswimming.org> for additional information. Please also send any questions to wahooswimming@gmail.com. This email address is maintained by the Head Coach who can either answer your questions or direct you to the person who can answer them.

(9.1) Codes of Conduct

The Swimmer and Parent Code of Conduct can be found with the registration information at <https://peaceriverswimming.org/swim-groups>

(9.2) Policies

The Club's written policies can be found at <https://peaceriverswimming.org/policies>. Policies are continually being updated and created on an as needed basis and as required by Swim Alberta.

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(9.3) Current Executive

The Club's current executive can be found at

<https://peaceriverswimming.org/executive>.