



POWELL RIVER AQUATIC CLUB

PARENT HANDBOOK



Considering Swim Club?

We are so pleased to hear you are considering swim club! It is a great sport that allows participants to focus on individual achievement while getting the social benefits of a team atmosphere.

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions:

- What are the requirements to join?

Swimmers may join the club the year that they turn 5 and they should be able to swim the width of the pool (15m), unassisted, using a recognizable stroke.

- Can my child try swim club before committing to it?

We offer a limited amount of trial spaces for new registrants each year. Swimmers can pay a portion of the registration fee in order to have a two week trial. If they decide to keep swimming, this amount is applied to their fees for the year.

- Do I have to join in the summer or can I join in the fall or winter?

The main club season is May-August as it is a summer swim club and part of the BC Summer Swim Association. This association allows for unlimited swim time during the summer months but restricts the number of swimming hours swimmers can train in the off months. Fall and Winter Maintenance is for the maintenance of skills learnt and endurance gained from the summer months. Therefore, the club restricts Fall and Winter Maintenance registration to those swimmers who swam during the summer months. If you wish to swim during the fall and winter, you must swim with the club during the summer.

- What is the cost and time commitment?

The cost and time commitment will vary based on the swimmers age and skill level as well as the swimmer's preference for the number of practices, desire to go to meets, and commitment to attending dryland or fun activities outside the pool. Depending on the age and ability of the swimmer, they can choose between 2 and 3 or 4 days a week in the pool, during the summer months. May and the first part of June, practices run Friday-Monday. Mid June or around where swim meets start, practices move to being held Monday-Thursday to allow for coaches and swimmers travelling on the weekends. Only Intermediate and Senior swimmers take part in dryland training. There are other fun events, outside of the pool that swimmers of all ages may take part in though out the season. Participation in all scheduled practices, dryland training and fun activities are encouraged but not mandatory. Swim meets are held most weekends, with a few weekends left open, throughout the summer swim season and it is optional for swimmers to take part in these.

Registering for Swim Club

If you are ready to join swim club, visit the club website or look on the club social media pages to find a registration link. Registration usually opens in late March or April. You can find the club website at: <https://powellriveraquatic.weebly.com/>

When registering, there are a few questions on the registration form that new parents may have questions about. Note:

- Although registration is organized by age, once in the water, the coaches will spend the first two weeks assessing swimmers and the actual swim groups will be determined by the coaches with both age and ability factoring into groups created. Please ensure you read the registration options for age, number of swims a week, and whether you want to select a two week trial if you are a new swimmer.

- **‘S’ and ‘O’ Category** swimmers: BC Summer Swim Association limits the number of hours a swimmer can train in the off-season (September to April). During these months, a summer swimmer must not have coached training for more than two hours a week with the exception of swim lessons or lifesaving programs as well as certain school related swim activities. As long as a summer swimmer has not swam more than two coached hours a week during the fall and winter months, they are a ‘S’ swimmer during the summer months. If they swim more than two coached hours a week during the fall and winter months, they are an ‘O’ swimmer for the summer season. Most swimmers are ‘S’ swimmers. If you are unsure about these regulations and have more questions, reach out to the club for more information.

- **Fundraising Fees:** The club requires that all swimmers have paid all fees in full before entering the pool. When registering, you will be given the option to not pay fundraising during the registration process. The reason for this is that some families have fundraising funds accumulated and use these funds instead of paying while registering. Club members have the opportunity to purchase grocery cards and in doing so, can accumulate fundraising funds with the club. These funds can be applied to future fee payments. Other members, simply do not fundraise and pay their fees in full when registering.

What Does My Child Need to Get Started?

Especially for new and younger swimmers, swimmers often wear their regular swimsuits to the pool. Most wear goggles, especially older and more skilled swimmers. Many often wear swim caps as well. It is recommended you bring a water bottle to stay hydrated. Most bring these items, as well as their towel and change of clothes, in a bag to have handy near the side of the pool.

Other swimmers, especially older and more experienced swimmers as well as those attending swim meets, will wear more specialized swim wear. Boys will often wear jammers or speedos and girls will wear more traditional suits or competitive race suits. Most swim meets require

athletes be wearing competitive appropriate swimwear, including jammers or speedos for the boys rather than a traditional swim short. These do not have to be FINA approved swimwear at this level.

If you plan to go to meets, please read the Swim Meet section below for additional items needed and information.

The First Two Weeks

On the first day of club, coaches will have created swim groups based on their current knowledge of swimmers age and abilities. Over the next two weeks, they will assess swimmers further and decide on more permanent groups for the season (these may still be adjusted based on need and swimmer development). If you are a new swimmer and have selected the two week trial option, try to come to each session and really get a feel for what club is all about. Remember that the groups are being assessed and shifted the first two weeks and they won't be finalized until after. If you have questions or concerns during this time, reach out to the club so we can answer them and help you feel comfortable. We hope you enjoy the experience and stay on for the season!

Dryland Practice and Other Fun Club Events

Dryland activities occur throughout the summer season for Intermediate and Senior Swimmers only. Swimmers are encouraged to participate in these but they are not mandatory.

Fun Events occur for different ages/groups and for the whole team each season. These occur out of the pool and include activities like movie nights, triathlons, games and activities, etc. which may vary year to year. Again, swimmers are encouraged to participate in these great team building and fun activities but they are not mandatory.

Awesome Apples and Peppery Peppers are fun recognition awards given out to swimmers each week throughout the summer season. They recognize personal growth, hard work, sportsmanship, and other skills and achievements. They are given out at the end of practice to a few swimmers each week.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are a fun chance for swimmers to try out their skills in a more competitive atmosphere. Despite this competition, the emphasis is still on personal bests. All swimmers' efforts and results are celebrated! In fact, swimmers receive fun, club temporary tattoos when they get a personal best time at meets! While attending meets is encouraged, there is no requirement to attend. Swimmers can attend as many meets as they wish, with exceptions for Regionals and Provincials (see below).

What do I need to do to go to a meet? A list of upcoming meets is available on the Club website for planning purposes. The coach will send out a meet package with all information

regarding each meet to swimmers ahead of time. Swimmers/Parents will be asked to confirm with the coach if they are attending. There may be meet fees to pay in order to attend. Swimmers will need to let the coach know which races they plan to swim in, prior to going. There are relay swims which involve a groups of swimmers from the team, swimming in a relay race together. Swimmers can express if they would like to take part in these but the space in them may be limited. These are usually the last swims to occur during the meets and your group will be depending on you to swim. This should be considered when signing up. If you are unsure which your swimmer should participate in, reach out to the coaches for suggestions. New, younger swimmers may be able to swim in Novice events which are less official, more fun in nature, where everyone gets a prize.

What do I need to prepare and bring with me to a meet? Parents will need to book their accommodations and may want to book ferry reservations. As swim meets occur in the summer months when travel is at a high, ferries and hotels tend to book up quickly so you may want to book these early.

At most meets, depending on location and the number of swimmers going, our club will bring large shade tents for swimmers to sit under when outdoors. Families can sit under these and some families bring their own. You may want to bring an outdoor blanket or mat as well as lawn chairs to sit on. Some find it helpful to purchase an outdoor wagon to load all their gear for the day and transport it easily from their vehicle to the club tent site. Most locations have some kind of food and drink services but they vary meet to meet and you should bring at least some food and drink of your own. Most families bring a cooler with drinks, food, and snacks. The meet packages will let you know what food services will be available for you to plan. Smaller, outdoor meets that have concession sales will likely be cash only.

Many swim meets will be outdoors and in the early summer months especially, plan for wet swimmers sitting outdoors and ways to keep them warm. Some swimmers bring a warm blanket or an old house coat to wrap up in, others purchase swim robes. In warmer months, you will need to sunscreen, hats, and cover-ups from the sun. Most swimmers find flip-flops or slides comfortable for easily taking on and off as they go in and out of the pool.

When at meets, FINA approved gear is not necessary but appropriate swim gear is. Suits need to be appropriate for racing in. Boys need to wear jammers or speedos at meets and girls can wear more traditional suits or competition swimwear. Swimmers usually all wear goggles and may wear swim caps. Swimmers can buy Powell River Aquatic Club caps from the Club but any cap is ok to wear. Swimmers will need towels to dry off and many find a quick-dry towel to be helpful at meets. You may wish to bring extra suits, caps, goggles, and towels to the meet as they can take a while to dry and can tear or break unexpectedly. Some meets have shops with gear available on site but not all will.

A heat sheet will be sent out before the meet and many find it helpful to print this off and have it with them at the meet. There is also an app, *Meet Mobile*, that is used at meets to track

swimmers' results and other stats. It is not necessary to have this and results will be posted at the meet but it is helpful, especially once your swimmer is attending many meets and competing in several events. This app will store each meet's results and your swimmer's stats for reference.

What will happen at the meet? Generally, meets are whole day activities but will vary meet to meet in length and how long you have to be there will be dependent on your child's age and the number of swims they take part in. There will be warm-up events and children must warm-up in order to swim. Warm-up takes place first, with Novice events generally going next, then each style of swim. Within each style of swim, races go from youngest to oldest divisions and alternate between genders. Some meets will have Finals. Divisions are based on age. If you are unsure of your child's division, there is a chart on the club site that will show you or you can check with the Club.

When teams first arrive, families unpack their gear for the day, set up their chairs and gear under the tents. If you are at a meet where we are indoors and not using tents, people bring their gear indoors and find a spot in the bleachers where they want to set up and watch the events for the day. Warm-ups happen first and all swimmers must ensure they get to warm-up on time as they are in time slots and you must warm-up. After warm-up, swimmers go back to the tent and stay warm, while waiting for their first race. Races are ran in heats and a heat sheet will help you know when your swimmer swims. There is a heat number displayed near the pool that lets parents know what race is occurring. You must watch as your race is approaching in order to marshal or to have your swimmer be at the block in time to race.

For younger swimmers, there is a marshaling station. At many meets, parents can escort their swimmer to the marshaling station. You check in your swimmer and they wait on benches until it is their time to swim when they will be escorted on desk to race. Some meets require swimmers to marshal themselves. Older swimmers must ensure they get signed in and get themselves to the block for their swim. If late, they will miss their time and not get the opportunity to race. There is a spot behind each block where swimmers can leave their flip flops, towels, or warm up robe, so that they stay warm getting in and out of the pool. Once a swimmer completes their race, they stay in the water until all swimmers are done and they are directed out of the water. In some instances, this will be after the next race has started. Once racers get out of the pool, they walk to the coaches' area to check in with their coach for feedback and encouragement, then head back to their parents and the club tent area to wait for their next swim. In the event of Novice swims, the rules are much more relaxed and swimmers will be given a lot more direction as to what they should do.

Race results will be posted somewhere at the meet as they come available. You will likely get your results faster if you have the *Meet Mobile* app. There are potential disqualifications (DQs) as well as different heats, and possibly, different divisions swimming in the same race and so swimmers should wait for final results to know how they placed. If your swimmer receives a DQ, it can be disappointing but it happens to all swimmers at some time, especially while

learning. Your swimmer can ask their coach why they were disqualified and use the experience to learn from.

In between races, swimmers should stay warm or cool (depending on the weather), stay fed and hydrated, and use the washrooms. For some younger swimmers especially, bringing other items, such as books, magazines, a deck of cards, drawing, etc. to stay entertained between events can be helpful. A few locations have playgrounds at the pool grounds that can be used but not all do. Between races, swimmers can also go cheer on their fellow teammates in their races!

With the exception of Regionals and Provincials, medals and ribbons are not given out at meets and will be sent to the club. Swimmers will receive any awards they earn at a later club practice.

Regionals and Provincials

Regionals are the summative meet for each region in the Province. We are part of the Vancouver Island Region. In order to attend Regionals, swimmers must have participated in at least one swim meet previously in the season. Regionals are the qualifiers for Provincials so while still fun, they are slightly more competitive in nature. Swimmers are limited in the number of swims they can compete in at this event. Swimmers must also ensure they are to the marshaling area or checking themselves in (dependant on age) at the right time. If a swimmer is late, their name will be called and if they fail to show up on time, they will miss their opportunity to swim. There are A and B Finals at Regionals which are swam in the afternoon on the same day as the preliminary heats for each swim. A Finals will swim for 1-8th place while B Finals will swim for 9-16th place. Those swimmers placing in the top 3 in Finals or those who achieve a Provincial Qualifying time will be able to advance to the Provincials. Swimmers must let their coaches know at the meet if they will attend Provincials or not. If people in the top three pass on their opportunity to go, those who placed in A Finals may be offered their spot, in order of their score. As in, if the third place person at Regionals declines going, the fourth, then fifth, etc. person will be offered the chance to go. If your swimmer does not automatically come in the top three or have a Provincial qualifying time but makes it to A Finals at Regionals, you should be giving thought as to whether or not you would be able to attend Provincials, if given the opportunity. Some swimmers from the A Finals at Regionals may also be given the chance to attend Provincials as Alternates and race if other swimmers do not show up on time at Provincials or can't swim for some reason. These Alternates must be willing to travel to Provincials, knowing they may not actually get the chance to swim. There are Medals given for 1st through 3rd place and Ribbons for all who make it to A or B Finals. Any who Medal will stand on the podium and have their pictures taken with temporary Medals directly after their swim. Medals the athletes can keep and ribbons will be sent to the club, after the Regionals is over.

Provincials are only attended by those swimmers who place in the top three in any swim or make a Provincial qualifying time at Regionals. They may also attend if they were in the A Finals at Regionals and get bumped in because another athlete can not go or if they were in A Finals, attend as an Alternate and another swimmer fails to attend or show up on time at Provincials. This is a very large event that rotates where in the Province it is held each year. The Provincials is a several day event and how many days you need to attend and how long of a day you will have at the pool will depend on which swims your swimmer qualifies for. This event is much larger in size than all other meets, including Regionals. Swimmers must also ensure they are to the marshaling area or checking themselves in (dependant on age) at the right time. If a swimmer is late, their name will be called and if they fail to show up on time, they will miss their opportunity to swim. Provincials will have alternate swimmers waiting to take people's places if they do not show up on time. There are A and B Finals which are swam in the afternoon on the same day as preliminary heats for each swim. A Finals will swim for 1-8th place while B Finals will swim for 9-16th place. If your swimmer places in the top three in Finals, they will stand on the podium with a temporary medal that day. Medals the swimmers can keep and ribbons for A and B Finals will be sent to the Club after Provincials is over.

What to Do if I have Questions or Concerns?

If your swimmer has questions while in the water, encourage them to ask their coach! They are there to help and support them. If you have questions or concerns, reach out to the club or the coach liaison. We are here to help!

Awards Night and AGM

The Club's Awards Night happens at the end of the summer season in August. Prior to the start of the Awards Night is the Annual General Meeting. Parents are encouraged to come out to the AGM and become more active in the Club. There are a variety of positions held by volunteer parents on the Club Executive and if there are vacancies, this is when the appointment to those positions occurs. Even if unable to volunteer at this time, all parents are welcome at the AGM.

Awards Night is a fun wrap up to the season for swimmers. Families can all come together and celebrate the end of a fun season. Every swimmer will be recognized in some way with additional awards being given out for participation and achievement.

Fall and Winter Maintenance

Fall and Winter Maintenance are only open to those swimmers who swam during the summer season as it is designed to be a maintenance of the skills and endurance learned and achieved then. If you want to swim in the fall and winter, you must swim during the summer. Similar to the summer months, groups will be made by the coach based on both age and ability. To maintain swimmers' 'S' status, they may only swim two coached hours per week. Swims occur on Sunday evenings and Wednesday mornings. Swimmers may choose to do one or both. Age limits may be placed on which swimmers can swim during these sessions as space is limited.

Contact

If you have further questions regarding Powell River Aquatic Club, please contact us at:

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