



THE SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE NEW SWIMMING PARENT

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- THE SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE NEW SWIMMING PARENT

O.K., you just rushed home, grabbed your check book and child (if applicable) and drove to a place where a half hour later, you incur a debt load of incomprehensible magnitude, you acquire a stack of incomprehensible forms, fund-raisers and parents guidebooks and other things that “help”.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have joined the Nanaimo White Rapids Swim team! The following are some observations from a former “new swimming parent”. With luck, some of these musings might make some sense. NECESSARY STUFF: Suit and Goggles! The basic items needed are a racing suit and a pair of competition goggles.

Vendors at swim meets will also offer discounts to team members as well. Ask a returning parent as well, as they have learned all the pit falls before you, they are a good source for all of your queries. A competition suit is designed to fit snugly in the front and back so that the swimmer can be as sleek as he or she can be. Buying a suit so that the swimmer can grow into it, or wear it for more than a year, is not recommended. Suits that are too large will only bag and slow your child down during competition. For Girls, a suit should feature a high neck line and closed back. For boys, the suit should be a brief or the new variety of spandex “jammers”. Baggy shorts are not recommended since they create too much drag and slow down the swimmer. If that reasoning doesn’t work, let your son go to practice in his shorts, eventually he will pickup the idea from his fellow team-mates. (it also helps when the coach picks up on this and has a six and under swimmer in spandex kick the butt of a Div II in baggy shorts).

Unless you are the World’s greatest “picker-upper” of your child’s stuff, it is highly recommended that an extra suit be purchased. Otherwise, on the day of a meet or on your way to said meet you will discover that your child has: ·left his suit at practice ·doesn’t remember ever owning one; or ·has been composting his suit in his bag since last week. Goggles protect the eyes from chlorine and help your child see under water. There are many types and styles. It tends to be a matter of personal choice.

The longest lasting goggles are those with rubber-like gaskets. A good pair has soft gaskets that conform around the eye sockets. "Swedish" style goggles (a hard plastic goggle that sits inside the eye sockets) are not recommended for beginners. For first time swimmers who have difficulty with rubber gaskets, a pair with foam gaskets may work better.

Anti fog goggles have coatings that reduce the effects of fogging. The coating degrades with time, but your child will have lost his goggles way before then. For those goggles without the coating, try dipping them in water or applying a little saliva before putting them on. Never wipe the inside of the goggle with your fingers or with anything that could scrape the surface. For new swimmers, goggles will also allow them to swim with their eyes open. This gives them greater confidence in the water. The coach will help them adjust the goggles and teach them how to dive so that their goggles stay over their eyes rather than eating them through the duration of the race.

OTHER STUFF!

Helpful items include a swim cap for long hair, a swim bag and chlorine shampoo. A latex cap is the cheapest of all the caps, but the most difficult to put on for the new swimmer. A Lycra cap is softer and easier to use. A silicon cap is easy to pull on and gives more protection than a Lycra cap, but is much more expensive than either the latex or Lycra. Swim bags have lots of mesh compartments to separate the wet from the dry items (this will be your doing however as swimmers have water in their ears and typically miss the instructions on a daily basis). Chlorine shampoo helps to remove the chlorine from your swimmer when their hair starts to look like TINA TURNER'S and they smell like a toxic swamp creature. Using it on suits also helps.

THE FIRST MEET

Start with a bag the size of your child, stuff it with everything you normally would take to practice and then double this. Also include warm clothing for your child. Pack light snacks and drinks for your swimmer. Your coach will probably have more to say about eating on the day of a meet. Don't forget a change of clothing for yourself, indoor pools can be extremely warm, and outdoor pools can change temperature like that. (visualize writer snapping his fingers) Make sure you know where the meet is and get a couple of families input to make sure you make it to the pool, because directions to "away meets" are written by; People who have worked for thirty years in the mapping section or the Pentagon. Desperate people trying to win a meet or; People who have lived their whole lives in that town and start directions with "make a left at the cherry tree at the big farm house with the red rose near the mail box..." Give yourself plenty of time and BRING A MAP! If you have non swimming siblings coming with you, do yourself and them a favour... BRING TOYS! Or other creative things for them to do. Remember that swimming pools can be a dangerous place, so keep an eye on them at all times. Don't forget snacks. Otherwise after numerous trips to the snack bar for candy, you will have to detox your child after the meet, and therapists are not included in your fees!

STILL WITH US?

Can't stop without a message. Good sportsmanship starts with you; cheer your child and your team. But remember that improvement and personal accomplishments are MORE IMPORTANT THAN WINNING.

SWIMMING – THE SPORT

The four competitive strokes are Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Butterfly. Each swim meet (competition) offers a variety of events and distances for each age group and classification. In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke he wishes. The usual stroke is the front crawl, alternate overhand motion of the arms and an alternating up and down flutter kick. The individual medley, commonly known as the “I.M.”, features all four strokes. In the IM the swimmer begins with the Butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to Backstroke, then Breaststroke and finally Freestyle. The Freestyle Relay consists of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event. Races are won or lost by the swimmers performance in the start or turn. At the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter, who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the gun or starting horn is sounded at the start of the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early or gotten an unfair advantage, the swimmer responsible will be disqualified.

Summer swimming league pools are all 25 metres long and typically have 6-8 lanes for competitors. Other leagues may use the “long course” pool which is 50 metres long.

U.S. pools may use 25 yard pools, which is a shorter distance than the 25 metre pool.

The International standard (used in the Olympics) is 50 metre lengths. All world records are accomplished in 50 metre pools.

THE RULES

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer. The technical rules may be found in the BCSSA rules and regulations handbook and can be requested through your Director of officials within your club or ordered through the BCSSA office. Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules, he will be disqualified from that event, which means he will not receive an official time nor be eligible for an award in that event. Disqualifications may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, walking on or pushing off the bottom of the pool, pulling on the lane ropes or even unsportsmanlike conduct.

THE OFFICIALS

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 his lane. Stroke and Turn Judges – observe from each end of the pool, as well as the sides, ensuring that the turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke. The judges are also walking abreast of the swimmers, to ensure that the rules relating to

each stroke are being followed 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; assigns and instructs all officials, and decides all questions relating to the conduct of the meet. If your child is disqualified (DQ’d) in an event, be supportive rather than critical. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as 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 school work... they point out areas which need further practice. 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.

ORGANIZATION

The British Columbia Summer Swimming Association or 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 Nanaimo White Rapids Swim Club is insured and sanctioned under the BCSSA umbrella and competes in the Vancouver Island Region. Each region hosts meets with all of the regional members with a regional Championship in the month of August. It is commonplace to involve other teams from other regions in swim meets. 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 in the month of August. The BCSSA trains all officials, supports various executive functions and provides guidance to member clubs in the Province of BC. The Nanaimo White Rapid Swim Club is a non-profit organization run by parents of swimmers on a volunteer basis. The club has been in existence since 1966, swimming mainly out of the Kin Pool in Bowen Park. The club currently consists of over 220 registered swimmers, and water polo players , and has a professional coaching base of approx 10 coaches.

GENERAL PARENTS ROLE

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 major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, and by coming to meets. Parents are not participants on their child's team but contribute to the success experienced by the child and his/her team. Parents serve as role models and their attitudes are often emulated by their children. Be aware of this and strive to be positive models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship at all times toward COACHES, OFFICIALS, OPPONENTS, and TEAMMATES.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND SUPPORTIVE

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of your Childs swimming experience is that he/she learns about themselves while enjoying the sport. This healthy environment encourages learning and fun which will develop a positive self-image within your child.

LET THE COACH ...COACH...PLEASE!

The White Rapids have spent years developing a strong coaching base of professional coaches. Our professional coaches are well trained, many with NCCP (National coach training program) qualifications. These coaches have years of coaching expertise and also swam as youngsters. They know what it is like to fail, for that is how they succeed, by learning the hard lesson and teaching others so that they too will succeed. For these reasons, and many more, it is important to know that your kids are in very good hands. Please allow your kids to learn, do not walk on deck and talk with your child during practice, and don't yell through the fence either. Allow the coach to deal with your child in a manner that suits them and their individual expertise. Coaches are looking to improve each and every swimmer for the benefit of both the swimmer and the club. If you wish to speak with a coach, an appointment can be arranged through a parent volunteer-Coaches liaison. Coaches will also reward your kids as a result of their hard work, not yours; allow your child the opportunity to earn this on their own merit by getting them to dry land training and swim practice in a prepared and positive manner.

The best way to help a child achieve their goals and reduce the natural fear of 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.

