



***SELKIRK
DOLPHINS***
SWIMMING

PARENTS HANDBOOK

SELKIRK DOLPHINS SWIM CLUB

P.O. Box 363, Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada R1A 2A8

Introduction

This manual is intended both as an introductory guide for new swimmers and their parents/guardians as well as serving as a refresher for returning Selkirk Dolphin families. It provides information that will help you with new terminology and activities that occur as part of competitive swimming. It also presents direction to guidelines set by the voluntary parent run Board of Directors and serves as a continuing resource for all involved in Dolphin swimming.

The Selkirk Dolphins, a sport team registered with Swim Manitoba and Swimming Canada since 1979, are most fortunate to have the Selkirk Community Pool as a home base. The pool is located in the Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive High School, 221 Mercy Street, Selkirk Manitoba. Not only is it used by the School Division but also the community extensively uses this facility. The Dolphins are a small user of the facility and as such must maintain a high standard of respect and responsibility for the facility and toward the employees who maintain and control the use of this facility. Disrespect, rudeness, abusive or obnoxious behaviour toward any staff member or employee of the Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School will not be tolerated.

Swimmers and parents are only permitted in the pool area which includes the upper gym (pool viewing area) and change rooms. All other areas of the school are off limits unless the Selkirk Dolphins have rented another area of the school for training or meetings. Running or walking in the halls and lower track are not permitted. Coaching and life guarding staff enforce pool rules.

The activities of a swim club somewhat resemble a pyramid; there are an ever decreasing number of swimmers in each level as the swimmer's abilities increase. We hope that every member will work to ensure that every level of the club functions well. Please lend your support to all club activities even if your swimmer is not involved in a particular activity this year.

We believe that the Selkirk Dolphins Swim Club and competitive swimming in general are a way of life that helps young people improve physically and mentally. It teaches swimmers to help each other improve as swimmers and competitors. It encourages young people to take pride in their performances and to be responsible for their own development. It is not the time or place on the scoreboard that determines the degree of success or failure but the extent to which swimmers perform up to their capabilities. By placing the emphasis on the aspect of performance every swimmer will be given the opportunity to "Be the Best You Can Be" and to become a better person in the process.

The Selkirk Dolphins look forward to your participation in the many activities that make the Selkirk Dolphins a dynamic swim club. Together we can provide the experiences and environment that will allow all children to achieve their maximum personal potential.

Philosophy

- To provide opportunities for social and emotional development and to provide the opportunity to gain self-esteem by participating in the sport of swimming.
- To provide training and competition to all swimmers consistent with ability, desire and performance levels.
- To provide the opportunity to learn sportsmanship and learn team cooperation and pride.
- To furnish a wholesome and worthwhile recreational outlet and to learn a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

General

Participation of a swimmer in any meet will be the decision of the Coach.

Swimmers will be informed of eligibility for meets. Permission forms will be sent to the swimmer's email account on file. This must be completed and returned by the deadline on the form to indicate if your swimmer will be attending or not. There can be no late entries. Parents will be held responsible for the cost as noted on the permission form once the form is signed and returned.

Coaches

The coaching staff are highly qualified trained professionals who instruct and create technical practice plans specific to your swimmer's development and abilities. Placement and evaluation is at the discretion of the coaching staff and is based on criteria outlined for each group. Commitment, performance, age, ability to train, attitude, technique, coachability and teammanship are all considered.

The coaching staff are here to support your swimmer's needs. If you have any questions related to the program – workouts, practices, schedule, goal setting, competition and swimmer concerns, please communicate with your swimmer's Coach or Head Coach after practice.

The coach travelling with the team has the responsibility and authority to be in charge of and manage the team while on the trip, including discipline.

Chaperones will assist the coach in any way required. If the coach is not immediately present, the chaperone(s) will be in charge.

The coach and chaperone(s) will establish the requirements for each trip, including but not limited to such items as curfew time, lights out, meal arrangements and other procedures not listed in this policy.

Parents are responsible for notifying the coach or chaperone in advance of any special concerns regarding care of the swimmer and to provide permission in advance for the swimmer to visit relatives or friends at the destination.

Discipline

Parents are responsible for the actions of their swimmer, including additional costs incurred.

Disciplinary measures may be administered as required. The Executive and the parents will be informed of discipline.

Violations of expressed prohibitions may result in the swimmer being sent home immediately at the parent's expense, loss of eligibility for future meets or other appropriate measures.

The Beginner Swimmer

Children join competitive swimming for a number of reasons. Kids swim to have fun, to be with their friends or to be future champions. Whatever the reason, young swimmers will learn a tremendous amount and they will gain valuable experience. When children are finished with their time in the club, they will have: (1) the ability to use the pool to their benefit, (2) skills of the four strokes, turns and starts, (3) an idea of how to race, (4) a desire to continue to participate in sports, and (5) a new group of exciting friends.

It is important that parents understand what competitive swimming consists of for a first year swimmer. First, the child should start the program with the ability to swim fairly well, (a basic understanding of and ability to do the front crawl or "freestyle" is adequate. Second, your child will swim approximately two to five times a week depending on the group in which they are placed. You may want to car pool to bring your kids to practice. It will be easier for you and fun for them!

By the end of the first year, usually a great amount of progress can be noted in the swimmer's style and strength. They will know the rules of swimming, the four strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and the "fifth" stroke – an individual medley (an event of the four strokes combined). Swimmers tend to become more outgoing and organized. If a swimmer is organized, a lot of time can be devoted to the sport without school marks suffering. Many changes – physical, mental and emotional – will occur in your child as she or he progresses through her or his swimming career.

The Beginner Parent

This information is geared to help parents understand "what they are getting into" when they join the swim club. If you have not belonged to a club in any sport before, please understand that you, the parents, are very important components in the swim club. Parents of swimmers form the Board that operates the swim club. When our club hosts any swim meet throughout the year, you will be required to officiate at it, acting as timers, judges and a host of other roles. Without parents, there would be no competitive swimming.

Parent-coach relationships are very important. If your child is just starting out in the sport, it is natural for you to be very involved. Relax. Our coaches are professionals and they are there only to help your child enjoy her/his swimming techniques. Coaches are teachers and role models. Parents should try to back the coach in her/his decisions for your confidence and trust in the coach will be reflected in your child. Be prepared to "give up" your child to the coach for practice and competition. Parents are NOT allowed on the pool deck during practice. If you need to speak with the coach please do so either before or after the work out.

Parent – Swimmer Relationship

The most important thing a parent can do for their child is to hold their expectations to a reasonable level. Try not to expect anything that is beyond your child's ability. Work with your child to develop long and short term goals that you both agree are within reach. Goals are important in that they create a focus in children's lives. Swimmers can control and participate in their future. Focusing upon "best times" is probably the most important rule swimmers and parents alike follow.

Parents should also realize the effects of growth and maturation on a child's swimming performances. Boys usually have a growth spurt between 12 and 14 years. They will probably appear more tired and less enthusiastic during this period because a lot of energy is going into growth. A 10 year old and under swimmer may appear awkward at 13. Girls begin their growth spurt earlier than boys – usually between the ages of 11 and 13. Physical changes take place. Some girls may never regain their fastest times at age 14 that they had at age 12. Be aware of the changes that take place in your children. Try to increase your sensitivity and understanding during the times of increased physical and mental growth as this period can be quite stressful to a child.

Parents should also be aware of the "peaks" that will occur in their child's swimming career. Peaking is a long or short term leveling off of swimming times. Every swimmer invariably goes through a stage in his or her career where times do not get faster. For some, it might take a long time to get through this period; for others, this stage may last only a short time. Please be aware of this and encourage your children to work through this period and not become discouraged. Time, hard work and adaptation to changes in physique are what it takes to get through peaking.

The Swimming Seasons

Competitive swimming consists of two seasons – short course and long course. During the "Short Course" (SC) season, all competitions are held in pools with a length of 25 meters whereas "Long Course" (LC) meets are 50 meters long. Race times are generally slower in the longer pool as there are fewer turns which are an advantageous skill. Swimming in Manitoba is divided into levels of ability by time standards. The levels are "A" and "AA" times. Beginning swimmers aim for "A" times and will progress, as they get faster, into qualifying times. Swimmers are also divided into age groups. Through these divisions, children will be competing against others who have approximately the same physical and developmental abilities.

Swimmers in the Bronze group will be able to experience at least one swim meet – possibly more. For the swimmers in the other competitive groups there are several meets per season which are great fun and provide the opportunity for your child to make new friends and gain valuable experiences. Two or three meets a year are out of the Selkirk/Winnipeg area for those swimmers with qualifying times. You will be amazed at how independent your children will become – eventually carrying meal money and ordering for themselves at restaurants. The club has a list of rules for out of town meets which are contained in this manual. Swimming competitions are good for children because they allow swimmers to get to know themselves. Racing creates strong, mature, mentally tough people. If a swimmer has a particularly good race, she/he can feel extremely proud; if she/he has a bad race, she/he must reason with what went wrong. It takes an incredible amount of courage to stand up on the starting block so parents can be proud each time they see their child in a race. Just having the courage to swim against and in front of others is a great accomplishment.

Program

A carefully planned program has been designed to allow smooth transition up the developmental ladder. Practice hours and content have been planned so that movement to the next higher group is unhurried, appropriate and in the best interest of the swimmer and her/his ultimate potential. Each group builds on skills learned in the group below, and transitions are logical, based on age, maturity and ability. Teaching is most effective when we can teach similar skills to a group of children who are at a similar stage in their development as swimmers. Training times range from two hours to more than 12 hours a week, depending on age, maturity, skill, aptitude and commitment.

We wish to encourage versatility both in and out of the water. Commitment to goals and to the means of achieving those goals are important lessons to be learned from swimming but we hope to always keep in mind that kids need time to be kids and should be able to participate in other activities in conjunction with swimming, until such time as a swimmer's aspiration level makes an exclusive commitment to swimming necessary if the swimmer is to attain her/his goals.

Practice Times

The regular schedule for the various swim programs will be available on-line prior to registration. Note that during Christmas and Spring Breaks, the schedule will vary. Training times will range throughout the year based on the training phase your swimmer is in.

It is important for swimmers to be punctual for all practices. Pool time is strictly adhered to as there are many users of the pool. Dry land and water training is designed as a team endeavour so being late disrupts other swimmers and the program as well, it reduces training time for the individual swimmer. An important aspect of swimming is commitment and self discipline, one element of which begins at the time practice starts. The coaches clearly expect swimmers to be on time. Please ensure punctuality.

Swim Cancellations

Please note that swim practices may need to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions. Cancellations will always be **posted on our website** so please be sure to check our website often. An effort will also be made to send an email out to swim families in either of these instances but there are times when this may not be possible.

It is **VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE** that we do not have the ability to reschedule practices or give refunds for swim cancellations for any reason. Our fee structure does take into account Christmas Break and Spring Break as well as unforeseen cancellations.

Swim Meet Entries

Swim meets are a very important part of competitive swimming and are always a highlight. Your swimmer's coach will decide which meets your swimmer should participate in and what events they will swim.

A list of upcoming swim meets is posted on the website. If your swimmer is unable to participate because of other family commitments, it is up to the parents to notify the coach in advance.

Permission forms will be sent to the swimmer's email account on file. This must be completed and returned by the deadline on the form to indicate if your swimmer will be attending or not. There can be no late

entries. Parents will be held responsible for the cost as noted on the permission form once the form is signed and returned. This will be applied for out of town meets as well. The Club cannot absorb the costs for travel, rooms, etc. after being confirmed, nor can the additional costs be split among other families who have already budgeted for a specific amount.

Team Travel Policy

The opportunity for a swimmer to travel to an out-of-town meet can be very exciting. Travel can be a great incentive to train hard and qualify to attend certain meets.

The team travels by family car or van or bus and is always accompanied by at least one coach and a parent volunteer chaperone (depending on numbers).

Please be sure to check the website for details of travel meets. It is your responsibility to respond prior to the deadline. the swimmer's family will be responsible for all the costs of that trip, even if it is necessary for you to cancel at the last minute.

It is a privilege to travel and represent the Selkirk Dolphins. Those competitive experiences will make your swimmer a more complete swimmer. The coaches encourage swimmers to go on trips for which they qualify.

If you are not able to accompany your child to an "out-of-town swim meet" arrangements can usually be made with a fellow parent or family who is attending with their own child(ren). Please contact the head coach for the names of possible families you might be able to make arrangements with.

Swimmers Rules

Swimmers are expressly prohibited from the following:

- Unreasonable behaviour endangering one's own life or the lives of others.
- Use and/or possession of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.
- Behaviour regarded as "criminal" in intent such as assault, theft, and deliberate destruction of property or promiscuous sexual behaviour.
- Unauthorized departure from the group, pool or hotel

Swimmers are required to stay together as a team to the extent possible:

- Swimmers require permission from the coach/chaperone to leave the main group, and then only in groups of two or more.
- Swimmers must advise the coach or chaperone of where they are going and of the expected time of return in order to obtain permission.
- Swimmers aged 12 and under should be accompanied by an adult.

Swimmers are required to treat hotel accommodations with respect:

- Swimmers and their parents are responsible for accidental damages, including damages to property of other swimmers.
- Swimmers require permission of the coach/chaperone for visitors in rooms.
- Visitors of the opposite sex will require doors to be propped open.

Room checks will be made at curfew. Swimmers are not to leave accommodations after curfew except in an emergency, and then only to obtain assistance from the coach/chaperone.

Swimmers are required to exhibit good sportsmanship. Foul language or obnoxious behaviour toward coaches, chaperones, officials or other swimmers will not be tolerated.

Swimmers are regarded as representing the Selkirk Dolphins Swim Club, the City of Selkirk, and the Province of Manitoba and Canada, depending on where they travel. Swimmers are therefore required to dress and act reasonably and responsibly at all times, whether on a plane or bus, in a restaurant, in a hotel, at a swim meet or at the Selkirk Pool.

Swimmers and parents are expected to adhere to all the Pool Rules as outlined and stated by Head Guard/Supervisor:

Swimmer Progressing to the Next Swim Level

When swimmers are notified that they are ready to move up to the next level of swimmer training, it is a very exciting moment. It is a very positive indication to them that all their hard work and time in the pool has paid off. It is a realization of success, and, as parents, you will no doubt share in the moment. It is therefore very important that this movement take place in an organized manner.

When your child's coach feels that a swimmer is ready to progress to the next level of training, the Coaches will notify the Club President, the Registration Coordinator and the swim family about their swimmer's accomplishments. If everyone is in agreement, additional fees and commitments will be assessed accordingly by the Registration Coordinator.

You will be very pleased to note that everyone in the club shares in the excitement of swimmers moving to the next level. It is a sign that the club is succeeding in our goal of providing the best of competitive swimming.

Feedback to Parents

Coaches at each level are continually assessing each swimmer's progress. They can give parents verbal feedback on a regular basis. The coaches are available after practice (please do not interrupt them during practice). Parents are not permitted on the pool deck during practice times.

Club Finances

Registration is on line through ACTIVE NETWORK. Credit card payment is accepted. Automatic withdrawals are set up for 4 equal payments. Swim meet fees will automatically be charged to your credit card on file. If you swimmer moves up the system will calculate the payment fee difference. Reminder email will be sent out prior to the credit card charge.

Failure to meet these obligations could result in LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP, SUSPENSION OF TRAINING, and LOSS OF MEET ENTRY PRIVILEGES OR OTHER ACTION APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

Pool Rules

Swimmers are to respect the rules of the pool and all staff who enforce them.

Lockers are available for the time the swimmers are in the water. Nothing should be kept in lockers over a long period of time.

All equipment used by the Selkirk Dolphins must be put away properly, including lane ropes.

Equipment

The Selkirk Dolphins purchase and offer to our membership a number of swim related supplies. Some of the items made available are team swimsuits, caps, T-shirts and team jackets. Every effort is made to ensure the items are of good quality and priced reasonably.

The decision is yours whether or not to buy any or all of the offered items. However, it is requested that all swimmers in the Gold Level and up should purchase a team apparel as soon as possible for your swimmer to wear at swim meets. Unity creates a sense of pride and loyalty to the team that will be noticed by everyone in the swimming world.

The Selkirk Dolphin Swim Club is known throughout Winnipeg, Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta: let your swimmer wear our colours proudly.

Terminating Your Membership

Should your family decide to terminate your membership with the Selkirk Dolphin Swim Club during the swim year, it is your responsibility to notify the Director of Registration in writing before the 15th of the month. You will be responsible for all financial and time commitments to the end of the month in which you tender your withdrawal. Any withdrawal requests received after the 15th of the month will be accepted for the following month. Additional fees may be attached.

No refunds will be issued after April 1st.

The Director of Registration, upon receiving your termination, will notify the Board, your Coach, and the Treasurer. After an audit of your accounts, you will be notified whether or not you still owe monies to the club. If monies are owed, payment is requested immediately.

Suggestions for Parents

1. Make sure your children know that, win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their best efforts and are not disappointed in them. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your children's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, their sportsmanship and actual skill levels.
3. Be helpful but don't "coach" them on the way to the pool, at breakfast, or at meets etc. It's tough for the swimmers to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often-critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Don't say, "Winning doesn't count" because it does. Instead, help them develop the feel for competition, for trying hard and for having fun.
5. Don't compete with the coach. Remember that in many cases the coach becomes a hero to the athlete and someone who can do no wrong. Just wait it out. At first, because the coach is the hero who hands out pats on the back and is very sympathetic and so on, the young athlete will be very happy. It will come full circle once the coach has to correct, criticize, discipline or ask for extra effort or sacrifice.

6. You should get to know the coaches so that you can be assured that their philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to expose your child to them. The coaches have a tremendous influence on your children.
7. Don't compare the skills, courage or attitudes of your children with that of other members of the team.
8. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate - both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reactions to the tales of woe or heroics they bring home. Do not cut your youngsters down if you feel they are exaggerating – just take a look at the situation and gradually try to develop an even level.
9. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. There are different kinds of courage. Some of us can climb mountains but are frightened to get into a fight; others can fight without fear but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas – nobody escapes fear and that is just as well since it often helps us avoid disaster.

100% effort is recommended: The coach will help each swimmer make a commitment to a personal training schedule. As parents, we have the responsibility of ensuring that the training schedule is realistic and that the swimmer maintains the agreed schedule. Attendance is located in the swimmers portal, please check for comments etc. **75% attendance is required 6 weeks prior to a major competition, to attend and participate in qualifying meets. GPI MANSASK PWI AND National level meets.**

Notify the coach (preferably in advance) when school exams, concerts and similar activities will disrupt the schedule. If a swimmer is violently sick and unable to swim, notify the coach and keep the swimmer at home. Ask for a modified training schedule, if necessary, after a prolonged illness.

Avoid embarrassing your swimmer. It is our responsibility, as parents, to fulfill the financial, volunteer, officiating and other commitments that we undertook as members of the Selkirk Dolphins Swim Club. Be punctual: individuals who are late confirming participation in club activities can cause the club considerable inconvenience and possible financial loss. Parents can help the club by demonstrating and encouraging punctuality.

We sincerely hope your family enjoys the sport of competitive swimming and thank you for making the Selkirk Dolphins Swim Club your choice.

Please attend all functions and meetings posted as your input is important to us.

Everyone is part of the Selkirk Dolphins Team

Board of Directors

The Selkirk Dolphins Swim Club is a nonprofit corporation administered by a Board of Directors elected each year by the membership. The Board includes an Executive consisting of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary and a Board including Directors of Fundraising, Marketing, Registration, Volunteers, Program and Officials.

These positions are all voluntary and held by parents of swimmers in the club.

If you are wondering about a club policy – why it was put in place, how it affects you – speak to any board member. The club operates according to a Constitution that is available at meetings and upon request. Any

individual may apply to the Selkirk Dolphins for membership and the Board will consider all applications and is empowered by the Constitution to confirm or deny membership of the club.

Updated information can be found on the website.

www.selkirkdolphins.com