

# **Brock Niagara Aquatics**

Team Policy & Procedure Manual  
Swimmer/Parent Resource Manual

Updated: June 2020

## ***Welcome to Brock Niagara Aquatics!***

We hope that your time as a member of the Brock Niagara Aquatics club is a positive, fun-filled learning experience. We have put together this manual to assist both parents and swimmers in understanding the policies and procedures of our club, and to assist with any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions or to discuss your child's progress. We are happy to hear from you—and hope that we can work together to provide the best possible program for our members!

All Brock Niagara Aquatics members are registered members of Swim Ontario and Swimming Canada and, as such, are subject to all benefits, rules, and regulations of these organizations.

### **Mission Statement**

*BNA flourishes through the provision of opportunities for our athletes and staff to learn, grow, and improve. Although we share a common purpose, we recognize and honour diverse perspectives and approaches. Our mission is to nurture and support our athletes in the discovery of personal and athletic excellence through exemplary leadership and teaching.*

### **Club Objectives**

The objectives of the Club are:

1. To provide programs and training for the development of competitive swimming excellence in the Niagara area based on the SNC Long Term Athlete Development Model.
2. To promote programs for stroke improvement and fitness.
3. To provide leadership and training for the broader Niagara swimming community.
4. To provide Club staff with leadership training opportunities and ongoing coaching education.
5. To provide opportunities and training for self-development and leadership in the management and operation of swimming competitions.
6. To provide sound administration of the Club finances and operations.

## **Program Goals**

There are significant goals that the Club strives to achieve in our programs for swimmers.

- To provide a progressive skills-based program following SNC and Swim Ontario long term athlete development models.
- To provide a wholesome and worthwhile physical activity program that promotes self-discipline and dedication.
- To provide opportunities to learn sportsmanship and to become aware of team co-operation and pride.
- To provide for all levels of swimmers the training and competition consistent with ability, needs, desires, attitudes and performance while maintaining a commitment to competitive excellence.
- To provide the opportunity for swimmers to gain self-esteem and worth by making and honouring a commitment to sport and a holistic, healthy standard of living.

### **Club Operations**

Brock Niagara Aquatics is a part of the Youth Programs department of Brock University Recreation. The club program is developed, administered, and operated by the professional coaching staff. In addition, there is a parent support group which takes responsibility for such items as organizing and officiating at swim competitions, organizing an annual awards banquet, and providing other social functions. Each family is expected to contribute volunteer hours to ensure the successful operation of the club, providing a fair and equitable distribution of work between all families.

### **Coaching Responsibilities**

The technical aspects of the Club (training and competitive preparation of athletes) are run by the coaching staff. Accordingly, the coaches are responsible for:

- Placing swimmers in practice groups. Placement is based primarily on the age of each individual, although factors such as ability level, experience and commitment level are also taken into consideration.
- Stroke instruction and the training program. The practices of each group are based on Swimming Canada and Swim Ontario's Long Term Athlete development models, and are geared to the specific goals and developmental needs of that age group.
- Competition attendance, swimmers' event entries and relay entries.
- Conducting and supervising warm-up procedures for the team at competitions. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive feedback regarding the swimmers' performance.
- Communicating with and teaching athletes and parents about our sport.
- Safety and supervision of athletes during scheduled practice/competition hours once swimmers arrive at designated meeting place.

### **Programs**

The Club offers swim programs designed to allow all swimmers the opportunity to improve and succeed at their current level, as well as providing for long term development in the sport. Brock Niagara Aquatics is the competitive component of the overall Brock Aquatics program. Offerings include a complete competitive swimming program encompassing approximately 150 Niagara young people. This team has operated out of the Brock University since the pool opened in 1981; and is proud of the team tradition of producing swimmers to represent Canada in international competitions while still providing basics for those who have yet to reach that level. Various squads within the team provide for all interested swimmers, ranging from novice racers to experienced international competitors. Several swimmers who have come through Brock's program in past years have gone on to National and International swimming success while representing Brock Niagara.

Young swimmers just starting out in the sport generally fit into the Brock Olympic Way Program for one or more sessions. Olympic Way comprises two practices weekly, in ten-week sessions through the school year; with a chance to compete once within each session.

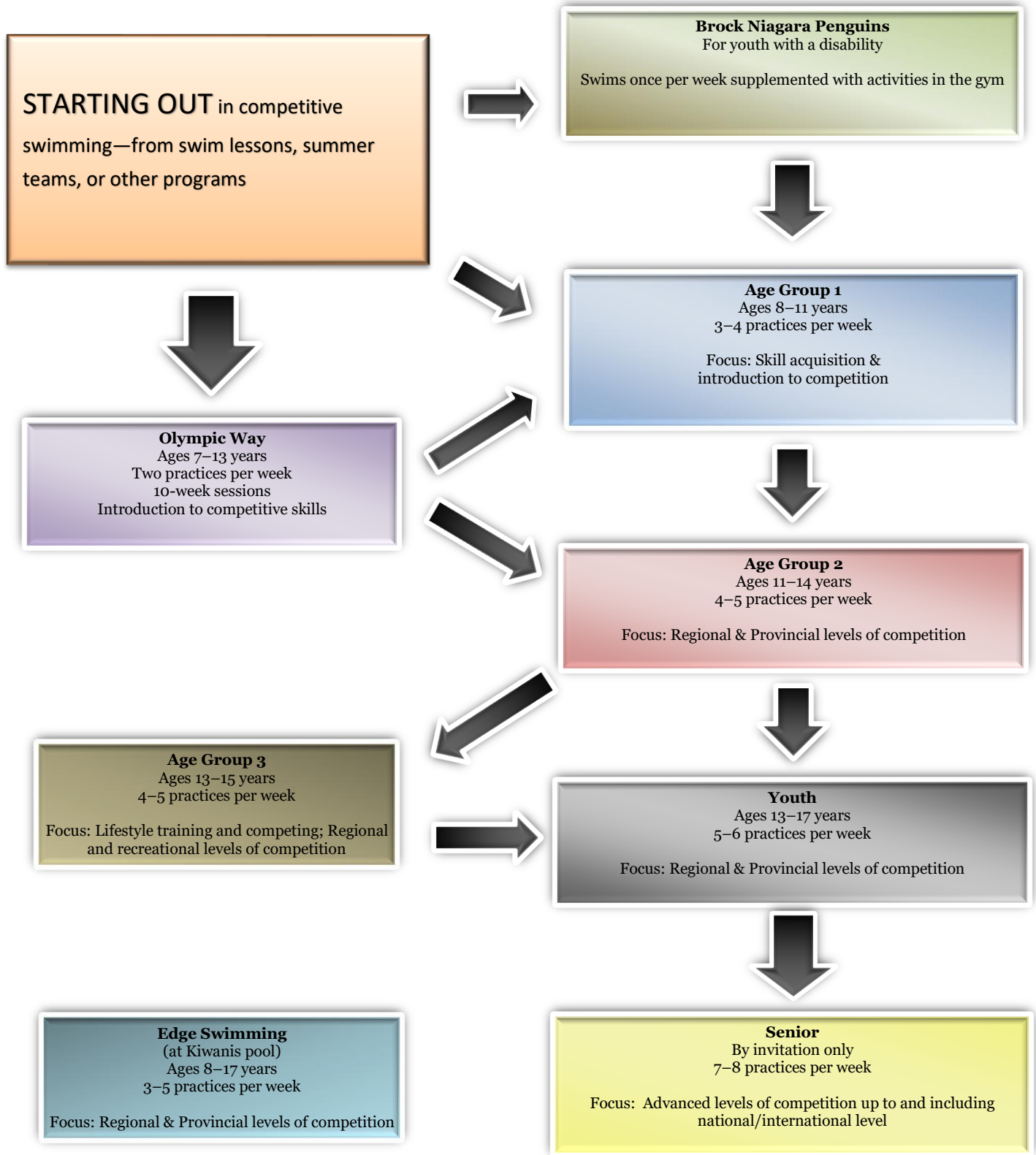
### **Training Groups**

Swimmers will be placed in appropriate training groups by the coaching staff based on a combination of age, ability, experience and level of commitment. While we anticipate that most swimmers will remain in their training group for at minimum a full season (usually two), coaches will inform swimmers and parents if they feel that it would benefit the swimmer to change groups mid-season. Group recommendations for the following season will be mailed to each family in the spring.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Swimmers are encouraged to participate in the full program schedule for the training group they have selected. This allows not only for maximum benefits in the pool, but it develops and encourages responsibility, punctuality, and dedication. Attendance is taken daily. If your swimmer is going to be absent have him or her talk with the coach about this, preferably in advance. Swimmers are expected to participate fully in all activities—please do not bring your child to practice if they are ill or unable to participate. Parents should contact their child's coach in case of injury, as activities may be adapted to allow for continued participation. Swimmers who show up late, and/or unprepared to participate on a regular basis for reasons other than illness/injury will have their parents contacted to discuss the situation.

## Brock Niagara Aquatics Swimmer Groupings



## Communication

The main form of communication with club members is via email. To ensure proper delivery of our emails to your inbox, please add the club's email address [brockswimming@brocku.ca](mailto:brockswimming@brocku.ca) to your address book. This will help prevent your spam filters from blocking our emails. Brock Niagara coaches regularly monitor this email account which should be used to contact any coach at any time. Likewise, official club communication will originate from this address.

The team website at [www.brocku.ca/brock-swimming](http://www.brocku.ca/brock-swimming) is updated regularly with practice schedules, competition calendar and results, current events and photos.

### Email Bulletins

Families are asked to provide a current and active email address for all information dissemination.

### Calendars

Group calendars are posted on the club website and bulletin board.

### Website

Items that are regularly updated to the website include: competition information (including session start times and event entries), competition schedules, news updates, group training calendars, club records, and championship time standards. Swimmers and parents are encouraged to check the website regularly for updates.

### Bulletin Board

A bulletin board is located on the pool deck near the women's changeroom doors. Items such as championship time standards, competition entries, time trial results, and newspaper clippings are all posted here. Swimmers should check the bulletin board on a regular basis.

### Coaches

Coaches are available to speak with parents by appointment. Coaches are often usually available immediately before or following workouts and competitions; but please do not interrupt the coach while working on deck. Email is also a good option. The club does have a written policy regarding electronic communication between coaches and athletes.

### Club Office

905-688-5550 x3244 (voicemail is available).

### Walker Complex Welcome Desk

Registration and information for all sessional week programs (Olympic Way, Penguins, Brock Niagara Masters) should be directed to the Welcome Desk in the Walker Sports Complex, either in person or via phone 905-688-5550 x4060.

### Parent Meetings

May occur throughout the year to provide the general membership with an opportunity to gather information, clarify questions, and meet with coaches and parent group organization. Please be sure to send a representative from your family to all meetings. Parents who wish to meet to discuss their child's progress are encouraged to arrange for an appointment by contacting their child's coach or the club office.

### **Parent Volunteer Group**

Email communication from the parent volunteer group will be sent throughout the season as needed.

## **Financial Information**

### **Instalment Fees & Competition Charges**

Information regarding annual swimmer fees per group is available at [brocku.ca/brock-swimming](http://brocku.ca/brock-swimming). Competition entry fees are extra, as are any travel and accommodation costs incurred to attend a competition. Any such costs are outlined in the meet announcements.

### **Required Equipment**

- **Practice suit:** Any well-fitting suit is appropriate. Polyester suits are longer lasting and are more resistant to chlorinated water than Lycra suits. As swimsuits wear out and begin to fade and lose their shape and opacity, swimmers will often extend the life of their favourite suits by wearing more than one suit during practices which provides better coverage and support and a little extra "drag".
- **Racing Suit:** Swimmers may choose to have a racing suit that is reserved only for use at competition. A racing suit does its job best when it fits tightly—when choosing a size, select one that fits now, and not one that the swimmer will "grow in to"; as a suit ages, it becomes looser and stretches on its own. Swimmers will generally wear a racing suit that is a size or two smaller than their practice suit. This reduces drag and the amount water that catches in the fabric as swimmers race down the pool. Team racing suits may be available for purchase early in the season. Before purchasing a racing suit, please read our guidelines here: <https://brocku.ca/brock-swimming/wp-content/uploads/sites/77/Swimsuit-Purchasing-Guide.pdf>.
- **Team T-shirt:** One team shirt is provided at no cost to all swimmers each fall, the uniform should be worn at swim meets by all team members. Additional shirts and other clothing such as track suits may be offered and are available for purchase at cost.
- **Team Cap:** Latex caps printed with the team logo are provided at no cost. Silicone caps, which are thicker and longer lasting, are available for swimmers who wish to purchase one. Swimmers should wear only the team-branded cap when racing.
- **Goggles:** Most swimmers need goggles to train and race; it is wise to try these on before purchase. They should make a tight seal over the eye-sockets and not leak or fall off when diving.
- **Fins:** Each swimmer should purchase a pair of short fins at season start. Scuba (long) fins are not suitable.
- **Water bottle:** A reusable water bottle filled with water is necessary for proper hydration.

## Optional Equipment

- **High Performance Racing Suits:** Swimmers who qualify for Provincial/National level meets may consider purchasing a suit made from a performance fabric (ie. Fastskin, LZR). Swimmers who are not yet racing (and training) at an elite level do not need these suits. Details are here: <https://brocku.ca/brock-swimming/wp-content/uploads/sites/77/Swimsuit-Purchasing-Guide.pdf>.
- **Kickboards:** Swimmers should use small-size kickboards only. Large kickboards float a swimmer too high in the water and do not allow for improvements in kicking ability, and may even increase chances of shoulder injury in older athletes. The pool has boards available for use; or swimmers may choose to purchase their own.
- **Pull buoys & Bands:** Pull buoys are available at the pool, or swimmers may choose to purchase their own. Swimmers in AG 1 will not need this equipment. It is important to use appropriately sized pull buoys – anyone below 130 lbs should use a Youth Size pull buoy. Bands are made available for the older club members.
- **Hand Paddles:** Not necessary for swimmers below Youth. Discuss with your coach before purchase.

Swimmers in all groups should dress in clothing appropriate for either indoor or outdoor land sessions as required. This will include shorts/track pants, t-shirt, and good quality running shoes.

## Equipment Room

Team equipment room is available for storing swimmers' personal equipment in mesh bags. Hang mesh bags on hooks or in bins. Misuse of this room will result in disuse of this room.

Please be sure to put your name or other identifying mark on all of your equipment. Swimmers are responsible for all personal items.

## Change-rooms & Lockers

Change-rooms are used by university students and members of the community of all ages. Please keep this area clean and be respectful of other patrons. Swimmers that abuse the facilities will be subject to disciplinary action that may result in disuse of the facilities.

Lockers are available for day use only in the change rooms. Items left overnight will be removed from lockers and held by staff of the Central Equipment Room.

## Lost & Found

Items that are left behind on the pool deck may be brought into the lifeguard office. Usually once per week, however, these items are brought to the Central Equipment Room. All items that are left in showers and locker rooms are brought to the Central Equipment Room. Any items that are considered of value may be brought to Campus Security. Please print your name of each piece of equipment so that these items can be recovered more easily if they are left behind.

## Privacy Policy

## Regulation



<https://brocku.ca/brock-swimming/about-us/policies#privacy>

### **Limited Use of Information**

Personal information is shared with coaches and managers only as needed for swimmer safety. Swimmer and parent names, phone numbers, and addresses are shared with club members for the purpose of competition hosting, fundraising, and social organization. Swimmers' names and ages may be included in newsletters and activity notices to be distributed in print and on the internet.

## **Parent Resource Section**

### **Fundraising and Volunteer Support**

Brock Niagara Aquatics has an excellent long-term relationship with Brock University that allows a balance of minimal fundraising obligations with moderately low yearly fees. However, we still pay a very large sum of money every year towards rental of the Brock University pool.

While many sports clubs must spend countless hours involved in hosting bingos or doing door-to-door sales, the Club relies on only one additional revenue source beyond fees: hosting several swimming competitions throughout the year. Not only are these competitions a source of income for the club, but they also provide an important opportunity for our swimmers to race in their home pool.

The Club hosts 3–4 competitions annually at Brock University and each competition requires a broad base of volunteer support. We ask each family to assist in these competitions, whether in the pre-meet organization or in the actual operation of the meets. Most of the work is simple, non-physical and requires no experience.

### **What Is The Expected Commitment?**

**Home Competitions**— Families are expected to volunteer at the home events hosted every year (3 to 4 annually).

**Away Competitions**— When swimmers participate in competitions hosted by other teams, we may be required to supply a minimum number of officials for each session; or the host club may simply need additional volunteers. Volunteering helps swimmers from all teams, so families are asked to contribute as necessary to ensure a good competition.

For more information regarding volunteer obligations, please contact the club or speak with the current parent-volunteer coordinator.

### **Common Questions and Answers**

#### ***Who orders team clothing?***

Team staff will provide order forms in the fall and/or spring. After the initial order is placed early in the season, additional items may sometimes be ordered/purchased by request.

Team equipment such as racing suits, fins, snorkels, and silicone caps may be offered for purchase through the club by contacting [brockswimming@brocku.ca](mailto:brockswimming@brocku.ca)

#### ***What is the role of the Parent?***

The parents support their swimmer and the work of the coaches. Parent volunteers are essential for running competitions.

***Who oversees the parent group?***

Currently the role is shared among volunteer parents like yourself that have a few years of experience with the team. Over the years, different individuals have chosen to step up and take their turn with tasks such as meet management, banquet committee, club officials chair, liaison, etc.

***What should I do if I have concerns with my child's coach?***

There may be times that you disagree with the decisions of the coaches with respect to your child's development. Contacting your child's coach to arrange a time to meet and discuss this privately is the best way to work through any issues. Members of the Meet Management group have volunteered to help parents understand the nature of swimming development should you wish. They can also act as liaison on your behalf.

It is essential for the safety of all of the swimmers that parents never interrupt a practice to talk with a coach. Parents should never go on pool deck during a practice. Coaches are usually available before and after practice instead for meetings.

***How can I best help the coaches?***

Remind your swimmer to be on time, ready to participate. As in a classroom situation, paying attention, being quiet and respectful when the coach is talking, and following instructions are important. Swimming is fun, and the swimmers want to socialize—but the sport is not all about playing and the swimmers need to learn when they can play and when they train. Remember too that in the beginning years, the coaches are helping all swimmers develop skill in all strokes. As the swimmer grows and develops, they will become better at some strokes/distances. Keeping them in their “best” race does not expand their repertoire. Development of skill is more important than speed, remind your swimmer that without technique speed will not happen.

When talking with your swimmer it is important that you talk in a positive fashion about the coaches and swimmers. If you are being negative, this will be picked up by your swimmers. Always encourage your swimmer to listen to the coach and to talk with the coach to receive clarification on instruction.

You may believe that providing some of your own technical advice to your swimmer may be helpful, but in fact, this “coaching on the side” be undermining the progressive work that your child's coach has been working toward. Coaches provide feedback to swimmers in a very selective manner while focusing on specifically outlined tasks or goals that the group or each individual is working toward. If you feel your child needs to be more focused on aspects of his or her swimming, please ask the child what has already been taught. If a poor answer is received, you may wish to refer your child to speak with his/her coach, ask your child's coach for advice, or ask to set up a meeting including parent, coach, and swimmer.

***When will this competition end?***

According to guidelines, every session at a Swim Ontario sanctioned competition must be complete within 4.5 hours. This time does not include the warm-up period. A realistic timeline can be determined

with the publication of the session's heat sheets which are usually available at the start of each session. Sometimes, swimmers will participate in more than one session in a day. Sessions may be back to back (with only a brief lunch break between) or may be separated by several hours (as in the case of Prelims/Finals meets).

## **Introduction to the Sport of Swimming**

### **Racing Seasons**

The competitive swimming year in Canada begins in September and is divided into two "seasons":

- Short Course (SC) racing takes place in a 25 metre pool
- Long Course (LC) racing takes place in a 50 metre pool

The Short Course season runs through the fall and early winter, the long course season starts during the winter. There are normally no competitions in March as it is designated as a rest and rejuvenation period by Swim Ontario. The swimming year ends in late June or July depending on the level of swimming and age. The majority of age group swimmers finish their swimming year with their school year, whereas swimmers racing at Senior Nationals or other International calibre meets may race into August.

### **Age Group vs. Senior Swimming**

Young swimmers compete in age groups against other children of the same age and gender. At the Senior level (i.e. Senior Nationals, the Olympic Games), there are no longer age categories; rather attendance in these competitions is based largely on achieving time qualifications.

### **Masters Swimming**

Competitive swimming for adults ages 18 and over is very popular around the world. Swimmers at Masters meets compete in age groups similar to the young swimmers but in increments of five-year spans: 18-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, etc. Brock Niagara Masters is a very popular program with some adults returning to the pool year after year well into their 70s. For information on joining Brock Niagara Masters, please visit [www.brocku.ca/aquatics](http://www.brocku.ca/aquatics)

### **Swimmers with a Disability (Para)**

Swimming is a sport where anyone can participate. It is also a very popular event at the Paralympic Games and Special Olympics competitions. Brock Niagara Aquatics is proud of its history of developing world-class athletes of all abilities. Swimmers with a disability often train and compete alongside able-bodied athletes in pools across Canada.

Youth and young adults with a disability may wish to try the **Brock Niagara Penguins** program, a volunteer-based group that swims and participates in dry land activities such as wheelchair basketball. The program allows for social interaction along with practice, refinement of skill, and competition. For more information on the Penguins, please see [www.niagarapenguins.org](http://www.niagarapenguins.org)

### **The Strokes**

**Freestyle** (50, 100, 200, 400, 800 & 1500 m; plus greater distances in Open Water swimming)

In the freestyle, the competitor may swim any style or stroke he wishes. The usual stroke used is the front crawl since it is the fastest.

**Backstroke** (50, 100 & 200 m)

In the backstroke, the swimmer must stay on his or her back at all times. The stroke mechanics are similar to that of the crawl. Swimmers must surface within 15 metres after the start and each turn.

**Breaststroke** (50, 100 & 200 m)

The breaststroke is a challenging one to master. It requires a constant up and down motion of the body and swimming takes place both at the surface and underwater—however, like the other strokes, limitations are placed on how much can be done below the surface.

**Butterfly** (50, 100 & 200 m)

The most physically demanding stroke, the butterfly requires an over-the-water recovery of the arms combined with the dolphin kick.

**Individual Medley (I.M.)** (100, 200 & 400 m)

The individual medley, commonly referred to as the I.M., features all four competitive strokes done in one race; each stroke covers an equal quarter distance. The order of strokes in the I.M. is as follows: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle. In the case of the I.M. event, the freestyle portion cannot be any one of the three previous strokes.

**Freestyle Relay** (100, 200, 400 & 800 m) and **Medley Relay** (100, 200 & 400 m)

Relays are swum by four different swimmers. In a freestyle relay, all four swimmers race freestyle. In the medley relay all four strokes are swum by four different swimmers. No swimmer may swim more than one leg of the relay. The order of strokes in the medley relay is: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle. With age group swimming, one or two swimmers in a relay are permitted to swim in a higher age category, but girls and boys may not swim on each other's teams.

## **Swimming Competition Operational Requirements**

Competitive swimmers target their training toward racing. The competitions in which Brock Niagara swimmers race are typically 1-3 days long (some provincial and national level competitions are 4-8 days long). There can be from 1-3 "sessions" within each day of a competition. Each session begins with a warm-up period followed by a competition period that can take up to 4.5 hours to run.

### **Warm-up**

The warm-up, which occurs before each session of competition, is typically from 50-90 minutes in length. During the warm-up, swimmers gradually warm their muscles, stretch, loosen up, get used to the pool and prepare themselves for the race. Continuous swimming, interval swimming (pace work), and racing starts from the blocks are all things that swimmers typically do at this time. During the warm-up period Safety Marshals are in place on deck to ensure the proper safety procedures are followed.

### **Competition**

After the warm-up, there is a short break (5-10 min.) during which the officials prepare to start the competition. Once underway, races are swum according to the schedule set out in the meet program,

one event following the next, normally without a break. The competition period in a meet session cannot be longer than 4.5 hours.

### **Between Sessions**

On days where there are 2 or 3 sessions, the cycle of warm-up followed by competition continues. The warm-up for the next session typically follows shortly after the completion of competition in the previous session. During this period, officials leave the deck for nourishment, rest, and preparation for the next session.

## **Officials Required to Operate a Competition**

Following is an overview of each of the officials positions required to run a swim meet.

### **Meet Manager**

- Prepares competition in advance (2–3 months or more depending on competition size).
- Sends out notices, details, results, awards, etc.
- Prepares the competition program.
- Looks after officials' recruitment, or appoints an Officials' Coordinator.
- Administers the competition, ensuring all positions are filled and requirements met.

### **Competition Coordinator (previously known as Meet Referee)**

- Chief official over all others during meet.
- Ensures fairness and makes decisions as required.

### **Session Referee**

- Chief on-deck official over all others during session.
- Indicates start of each race with whistle tone.

### **Starter**

- Starts each race by activating a starting device, ensuring the start is fair.

### **Recorder–Scorer**

- Checks the results, calculates individual & team scores.
- Data input, results programs.

### **Electronics Operator**

- Operates or assists in the operation of electronic timing and scoring equipment.

### **Chief Finish Judge/ Chief Judge of Electronics**

- Compiles order of finish of a race based on Timekeepers results sheets.
- Supervises results coming from an automatic electronic timing and judging machine

### **Chief Timekeeper**

- Responsible for all times, watches, timing plungers.
- Responds promptly if Timekeeper has any trouble.

### **Clerk of Course**

- Checks-in swimmers and directs them to proper heats and lanes.
- Keeps quiet and order on pool deck.

### **Marshal**

- A deputy to the Clerk of Course.

### **Judge of Stroke**

- One or two on each side of pool.
- Observes correctness of strokes.

### **Inspector of Turns**

- Observes correctness of turns at ends of pool.

### **Timekeepers**

- Take and record the time of the swimmers in their assigned lane.

### **Awards**

- Purchases medals and ribbons.
- Affixes labels to medals and ribbons and distributes to appropriate teams.

### **Hospitality**

- Organize and distribute food and drink to officials during the meet.
- Set up official's room and keep area clean.

### **Runner**

- Usually a young swimmer or assistant to Chief Timer who ensures flow of paper as required.

### **Safety Marshal**

- Ensures that all appropriate warm-up procedures are followed.

### **Levels of Officiating**

There are five designations for swim officials and the criteria for achieving each level is governed by Swimming Canada. The rules of swimming are generally consistent worldwide. For more information on Officiating, please see the Swim Ontario website at [www.swimontario.com](http://www.swimontario.com).

### **Swim Ontario Minimum Officiating Requirements**

The Swim Ontario Officials Committee (SOOC) encourages clubs to promote their officials' progression up the officiating "ladder." This enhances the club's ability to host and/or assist at competitions. The plan lists the minimum number of officials at each level that is required to obtain a competition sanction. For more information see **Club Officials Development Plan:** [http://www.swimontario.com/uploads/Officials/About/SOOC\\_Bulletin\\_2016\\_03\\_28.pdf?ct=t\(SOOC\\_Bulletin\\_93\\_28\\_2016\)](http://www.swimontario.com/uploads/Officials/About/SOOC_Bulletin_2016_03_28.pdf?ct=t(SOOC_Bulletin_93_28_2016)).

### **General Officiating Guidelines**

- Be professional at all times.
- Arrive on time with correct clothing.
- Bring a water bottle to refill.
- Be prepared to stay the whole session.

- Turn off cell phones.
- Remind your child to stay with their team and not interrupt your work.
- Stay alert and pay attention.
- Stay at your assigned position unless you have notified someone you need a brief break.
- If in doubt, ask.
- Take certification courses.