



The Port Moody Aquarians Summer Swim Club Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Assessments & Group Placement

How well do you have to swim to join the PMA Summer Swim Club?

Swimmers who are able to swim one length (25 metres) of the pool unassisted are ready to join PMA. We coach swimmers' proper technique and give them opportunities to compete. If your child is not able to swim 25 metres of the pool unassisted, they are encouraged to take community swim lessons and pass Swim for Life - Swimmer 4.

All new swimmers, returning minis and select return development swimmers will be assessed by our head coach and swim director in late March or early April. Swimmer families needing assessment will be contacted with details closer to the assessment date.

Will my child need to be assessed to join the PMA Summer Swim Club?

All new swimmers, returning minis and select return development swimmers will be assessed by our head coach and swim director in late March or early April. Swimmer families needing assessment will be contacted with details closer to the assessment date.

Why does my child need to be assessed?

The Port Moody Aquarians are a competitive swim club. All new swimmers, returning minis and select return development swimmers will be assessed by our head coach and swim director in late March or early April to determine appropriate group placement. At the start of the season, swimmers in our Development program are required to swim one length (25 metres) of the pool unassisted.

What do we need to bring to assessments?

Please wear a swimsuit and bring a towel and goggles.

What group will my child be in?

Coaches set group placements in mid to late April. Swimming skill is the primary consideration, but age and fitness level is also considered. All new swimmers, returning minis and select return development swimmers will be assessed by our head coach and swim director in late March or early April. See [Program Information](#) for group descriptions.

Practices

Where will practices be held?

PMA practices are held at both Westhill and Rocky Point Pools in Port Moody.

What do swimmers need to bring to practices?

All practices start with a warm up and are rain or shine. Items to bring:

- **Swimsuit:** are generally made of polyester, nylon, Lycra or stretch nylon. It is desirable to have both a practice suit and a competition suit, as the practice suit would ideally be more

durable but consequently heavier. The competition suit should only be worn for racing so as to keep it tight fitting and streamlined.

- **Towel:** usually prefer a thick, large beach towel.
- Goggles: Lenses worn by swimmers during practice and competition to enhance vision and protect their eyes from the effects of chemicals in the water. It is essential to get good quality goggles with an excellent fit. Try them on before you buy, not all goggles fit the same!
- **Swim cap:** A latex or silicone swim cap is used to cut down resistance and to protect swimmer's hair from the damaging effects of chlorine.
- Water bottle
- Runners & athletic clothing and runners for warm up

Other items swimmers like to have are a swim bag, swim parka, kickboard, pull and fins. Team Aquatic Supplies (TAS) in North Vancouver offers a discount (Shark Card) on swim gear to PMA registered swimmers.

Do swimmers need to attend all practice?

Practices for this group are generally scheduled for 5 to 7 times per week. To steadily improve their swim skills, swimmers are encouraged but not required to attend every practice.

Does my son need to wear swim briefs (Speedo)?

If your child feels uncomfortable wearing a Speedo, they may wear jammers. Please do not send your child in swim trunks, they will drag in the water causing your child to tire quickly. They also cause chaffing.

Swim Meets

What are swim meets?

Swim meets are the backbone of any summer swimming season. They are a chance for swimmers of all abilities to display the skills and strokes they have developed in practices. They are a fun and relatively relaxed opportunity to compete against other children of the same age and abilities.

Swimmers are separated into Divisions, by age (Division 1 = youngest to Division 8 = oldest) and by category S or O. See [Swim Age Locator](#) to find your swimmer's division.

- **A/B Swim Meet** – This is the most common form of swim meet in Summer Swimming. The Port Moody Aquarians attend all A/B swim meets within our region (Coquitlam, Burnaby, Port Coquitlam and our own Golden Spike Meet at Westhill) plus a few out of region meets. These meets take place on weekends and run from early morning to mid/late afternoon. All our swimmers are encouraged to participate in these meets, including new swimmers. However, the ability to swim at least 2 lengths of at least 2 different strokes is a good guideline for those who are interested in competing.
- **Development Meet** – Development Meets are geared towards the new and younger swimmers. There are a few of these meets throughout the season. The Aquarians will be attending development meets for clubs within our region. These meets are held on a Friday or Wednesday evening. They are open to swimmers who do not yet have the ability to swim 2 lengths of the pool, those who are new to competing and those who do not have the skills in all the strokes. Events include 25-Meter Races of all 4 strokes, as well as the option of doing 50-Metre races of their better strokes.

- **Regional Championships** – Every year, towards the end of the swimming season. The 5 clubs in our region (PMA, Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Burnaby and Burnaby Mountain) compete in the Regional Championships. This meet runs Friday evening and on the weekend and is the qualifying meet for the Provincial Championships and the final meet of the season for swimmers who do not qualify for Provincials. The top three swimmers in each individual event and top two teams in relay events qualify for the Provincial Championships meet held mid August.

Swimmers must have legally completed a race (no DQ) in at least one stroke during the season to attend this meet. At the coaches discretion, swimmers who have only competed in a 25m event may be entered in a 50m event at Regionals.

How do swimmers sign up for swim meets?

The link to register for swim meets is under the Parent's Corner tab of our PMA website: <https://portmoodyaquarians.ca>. There you will find a link for the Meets Sign-up Portal (Active), where you are prompted to sign-in to your Active account. Once you are signed in, select the **View Meets** tab along the top of your screen, and register your child(ren) for the meet. Please select whether your child is attending or not; **PMA cannot register on your behalf.**

What division do I swim in?

The division you compete in is based on your age at the start of the season. You can look these up in the [BCSSA Swimming Age Locator](#) available from the BCSSA each year!

What should swimmers bring to a swim meet?

- **Extra swimsuits** - many swimmers warm up in a training suit and change into their team suit for races
- **Extra swim caps** – PMA team caps help our coaches and spectators identify our swimmers up on the starting blocks
- **Extra goggles** – it never hurts to have a backup pair
- **Towels** – lots of towels! Minimum of two towels is recommended.
- **Warm clothes** – for rainy days it is nice to have warm, dry clothes. Bring hoodies, sweatpants, socks and hats! Check out our soon to open PMA Online Store.
- **Sneakers or Sandals** – as good as the grass feels between your toes, please ensure your swimmer wears footwear when not under the tents. Space is provided behind each block to leave swim gear and collect it from after the race. Remind your swimmers to collect their items after they swim.
- **Parka** – if your swimmer has a parka, have them wear it to the pool! Make sure your child's name and 'PMA' are written on the tag.
- **Sleeping Bag** – This helps kids keep warm between races or until the sun heats us all up!
- **Water** to keep hydrated! Just like at swim practices, it is important to drink water after warmups and races.
- **Healthy snacks and food** to keep your swimmer fueled up and ready to race! Fill a cooler with nutritious lunch items and lots of easy to digest snacks. A few suggestions: water, juice, granola bars, fruit, vegetables and dip, yogurt, cereal, trail mix, or sandwiches are great ideas to sustain an active swimmer.
- **Sunscreen** – for sunny days; even under bright clouds sun burns can happen.
- **Chair(s), Tarps and Blankets** – the grass may be wet; putting down a tarp on the grass under the tents is necessary to keep things dry. On top of the tarp, you can lay a blanket or sleeping bag.

- **Games & Activities** to keep your swimmers busy. There is time between races; games, colouring/reading books, etc. are a great way to keep swimmers busy and to build friendships. Sometimes the coaches will sit for a game, too!
- **A SMILE AND A CHEER!** Our kids are swimming the best they can each event. Let's be the loudest cheerleaders of the day and have our kids cheer on their teammates while we cheer for our kids.

My child does not swim very well. Why would they want to compete?

Swim meets are fun, provide great exercise, and help build confidence! Children are grouped with other swimmers who are of similar ability, which allows for a positive swim experience. Competitions allow swimmers to achieve their personal bests and measure how much they have improved. We encourage swimmers to compare their last best time rather than to other swimmers.

Why go to swim meet warm-ups?

No two pools are set up the same way. They may look alike but there are many differences; starting blocks may be higher than others, traction may be different, and even the clarity of the water can change from pool to pool. Warm ups provide swimmers with a chance familiarising themselves with the pool. This familiarity can potentially change their race dramatically.

This is also when coaches take a headcount, consider swimmers for relay teams, and provide a pep talk prior to races starting. They are also required to scratch "no-shows" to allow for last minute adjustments to swim heats.

It is in the best interest of your swimmer(s) to make it to the warm ups at each meet. It will only help their swims.

Do swimmers need to attend both days of a swim meet?

It is highly encouraged for swimmers to attend both days of a swim meet. Even though they compete individually, it is at the swim meets where we come together as a Team – hanging out playing games between races and cheering each other on. The coaches also want to ensure swimmers have the opportunity to race each of the strokes throughout the season – which is more difficult to do when only attending one day.

If you have conflicts which prevent you from attending both days or a full day, discuss with your coach about attending only one day or other options that may be available. A selection of one day only is possible when signing up through the Meets Sign-up Portal (Active).

How can I find my swimmers' meet results?

There are a few ways.

1. At the pool - during meets results are posted at the pool.
2. Meet Mobile - many meets also load results during the meet to Meet Mobile. Meet Mobile is an app that can be purchased through your usual app store.

Volunteer Expectations:

Are Parents/Guardians expected to volunteer?

Yes. Volunteerism is required for all members. Participation by parent volunteers is a key aspect of swimming life and fundamental to a successful Aquarians season. Parents are needed to volunteer in varied positions to run the swim program for our athletes.

The swim season cannot run without a commitment from all families to this crucial aspect of our Club. Expect to receive communication from the Club regarding volunteerism throughout the season.

For our own hosted Golden Spike Meet (end of June/early July), the volunteer help needed is much greater than at any other meet all season. We require that all families come and help out – even if your child will not be competing. Shifts will be assigned if there are not enough people signing up ahead of time.

At all other club's meets, PMA parents must provide timers and officials. Teams are allocated lanes to time according to how many swimmers they entered at a meet. Officials' positions are trained. Ask about our Official's training.

Shifts are usually short (2 hours or so).

What can I volunteer for?

Summer swim programs have a number of volunteer needs.

- For the club, there are a number of Executive and volunteer roles
- For our club hosted Golden Spike Meet
- For all other club's meets, PMA must provide timers and officials

Feel free to contact our Volunteer Coordinator at pmavolunteercoordinator@gmail.com if you have questions or ask any of our Executive Team members.

How can I volunteer if I have younger children that need supervision?

We understand that volunteering can be hard for families with younger swimmers; from parents that have been through swim meets with younger children here are some suggestions:

- Band together with other swim parents – stagger shifts so that you can help each other
- Bring an older sibling, cousin, grandparent, babysitter etc. to help your child while you are timing
- When it is their time to swim, encourage your child to come to your timing lane to say “hi”; give them a quick hug before they go to their lane to race
- Split a shift – pair up with another parent if you find the shift too long
- Share your phone number – text and ask for a break if you one

Swim Officials:

What does a Swim Official do?

Becoming a swim official is one of the best ways to see your child(ren) swim! It's also a great way to learn about competitive swimming. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer. Officials are present at all competitions to implement the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. Here's a link to the [BCSSA Officials' Duties and Pins](#).

How can I become a Swim Official?

Officials attend clinics and must shadow/work meets before becoming certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

The BC Summer Swim Association (BCSSA) encourages clubs to have a number of officials. We say the more the merrier! **Training sessions are usually held in May.** We hope you grab this wonderful opportunity to volunteer. Have questions? Contact our [PMA Officials Coordinator](#).

Golden Spike Meet Volunteer Roles

In addition to Swim Officials, to host a swim meet, there are several volunteer roles that need to be filled throughout the day. Other clubs attending our meet will be the timer so that our club families can ensure the meet runs smoothly for the swimmers. Here are descriptions of the the many roles:

ANNOUNCER

The Announcer works in the lifeguard room and announces warmups, first, second and final calls for events and any other public announcements our swim community needs to hear about. A basic script is provided; as well as they take direction from the Clerk of the Course and Starter to keep the meet running quickly and smoothly.

CLERK OF THE COURSE (CoC)

The CoC is the first point of contact for swimmers before they race. The CoC ensures swimmers are marshalled to the starting blocks for each event. The CoC:

- checks in each swimmer by calling out names, events and heads for ages 6 and under and Divisions 1-3 (Divisions 4+ self-marshall, the clerk can provide swimmers' their lanes and heats when asked)
- communicates (when necessary) with the Meet Manager, and Meet Referee, Starter, Marshals and Announcer regarding combining heats where possible.
- maintains quiet and order in the marshalling area

MARSHAL

Marshals work with the CoC by arranging swimmers (ages 6 and under and Divisions 1-3) in order of their heat and lane assignment by seating them on benches once they have checked in with the CoC. You will ensure the swimmers are in their correct lanes and heats and seated in the correct spots on the benches. Marshals may assist younger swimmers with caps and goggles and by making sure they get to the timers.

ELECTRONICS

Experience and training is required. The Electronics volunteers run the Colorado Timing System and work with the office volunteers to print results, add/scratch swimmers names into the computer. Located under the tents by the dive tank. If you have taken the BCSSA electronics course please sign up for this duty. Located on deck beside the dive tank.

OFFICE

These positions require some experience, but it is also a great opportunity to learn from one of our more seasoned Office volunteers. The Office volunteers set up the office by ensuring there are office supplies. They print heat sheets in the morning and before relays start and then provide the sheets to officials, coaches, timers, CoC and Marshals. You will work alongside the Electronics volunteers and enter DQs and relay teams, including the individual names of swimmers, into Meet Manager. You will print out the results by Division as they come in and hand those to a runner or another office volunteer to post. And you may also print the labels that will be affixed (by the AWARDS volunteers) to the placement ribbons for swimmers.

AWARDS

These volunteers place labels on corresponding ribbons as the results come in. Labels are to be affixed to the correct placement ribbons. The goal is to have the ribbons completed by the end of the meet on Sunday so coaches can collect them for their swimmers before they head home.

CONCESSION

Concession volunteers sell concession food and work with the BBQ team. This role (dependent on shift) includes concessions set-up and take down, taking orders and payment and communicating orders to the BBQ team. To communicate accurate orders to the BBQ Team, the concession volunteer writes the BBQ order on the back of a plate that the customer takes to the BBQ volunteer to be filled.

BBQ

BBQers work the grill ensuring swimmers and families receive their orders in a timely manner. The three roles work together with one volunteer at each of the three stations: grill, deep fryer and front table. The front table volunteer receives orders from the customers (on the back of plates) and communicates it to the cooks. It's a FANTASTIC job if you love to BBQ!

DECK FOOD

Deck food volunteers ensure officials, volunteers and coaches are fed. These volunteers prepare the food, decide which snacks to serve first (by considering what can sit or may need refrigeration), and deliver it to the deck in set intervals. This is a great starter role for volunteering.

RAFFLE BASKETS

There will be two tables set up on deck (near showers) for raffle baskets display. Raffle basket volunteers sell raffle basket tickets and encourage purchase of the online 50/50. Customers place half of their tickets into the marked container(s) in front of the basket(s) they wish to win. This is a great starter role for volunteering.

Team Gear:

How can I get Team Gear?

- **Team suits** are bulk ordered at the beginning of the season. Exact dates, times and locations for suit sizings and order deadlines will be communicated prior to the start of the swim season. It is highly recommended swimmers try on the suit before placing the order as sizes vary between different styles and manufacturers. Exchanges for incorrect sizes may not be possible.
- **Team Caps** are available for purchase any time during the season. The coaching staff and some executive members will have caps with them during practices and swim meets in case a replacement cap is needed.
- **Team Clothing / Personalized Caps**
Team Clothing and personalised caps are placed as a group order once or twice during the season. Instructions will be distributed a few weeks before an order is planned.

Do I have to buy a team suit and cap?

If your child plans to attend competitions, both a team suit and cap is customary. The main reason we have team suits and caps is so we look like a team at competitions. Team suits and caps also help our coaches identify our swimmers up on the starting blocks.

Team suits offered are of good quality at a discounted price due to a bulk purchase. Even if you do not plan to go to competitions, these suits last a lot longer than cheaper suits which get saggy when used repetitively in the chlorine pools.

If purchase of a team suit is not possible for your swimmer, there are acceptable alternatives. Some guidelines:

- All swimmers must wear a team cap in races
- We encourage that suits used in races are our team colours: Black/Red/White
- Boys should wear male race suits and/or training suits (jammers or brief) - swim trunks will drag in the water causing your child to tire quickly
- Girls should wear one (1) piece race and/or training suits

Is one swimsuit enough?

Having a few suits is recommended. For competition a properly fitted racing suit is tight. Swimmers often bring a training suit for warm up and change into their race suit after.

For practice, owning a few training suits can be of benefit. They are more comfortable for daily practice and ensure the team suit is in good shape for races.

Suits are generally made of polyester, nylon, Lycra or stretch nylon.

Does PMA have other gear?

Yes! Check out the PMA clothing store hosted by Real Hip Clothing:

<https://realhipclothing.com/collections/port-moody-aquarians>