



Toronto Synchronized  
Swimming Club Inc.

# COMPETITIVE DIVISION

# HANDBOOK

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# Toronto Synchronized Swimming Club Inc.

## **THE CLUB**

The Toronto Synchronized Swimming Club Inc. is incorporated as an Ontario not-for-profit corporation. The members of the corporation are the parents of swimmers and swimmers over the age of 18. Coaches are non-voting members.

A volunteer Board of Directors, elected by the members, operates the Club. Elections are generally held in June of each year and are confirmed at the Club's Annual General Meeting, in late September or early October. At least one parent of each swimmer is strongly encouraged to attend this meeting. Additional Board members may be elected at this meeting.

Board meetings are usually held monthly. The Board will determine the dates and place of the meetings. Parents are always welcome to attend Board meetings. If you have an item that you would like placed on the Board's agenda, please contact one of the co-presidents.

The Club is a member of Synchro Ontario and Synchro Canada; each swimmer will be registered as a member as well. Synchro Ontario has a group insurance plan that covers all clubs and registered members of Synchro Ontario when engaged in Club activities.

## **COACHING**

Our coaches are all qualified under the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) and have undergone a Police Record Check (PRC). The Club's Head Coach is Jen Bell, a former national level synchronized swimmer and Canada Winter Games team member, as well as a NCCP accredited coach.

## **THE COMPETITIVE PROGRAM**

A typical competition will consist of a team routine and individual figures. At the beginning of each season, the Head Coach will assess each swimmer for placement on an appropriate team on one of seven competitive Tiers based on age, ability, and skills. In some circumstances, a swimmer may be offered a team placement as an alternate swimmer to provide an opportunity for that swimmer to train with a higher

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level team.

Some swimmers may compete in an extra routine – a duet or a solo. The coach generally picks the girls in consultation with their parents for these competitions at the beginning of the swim year.

A swimmer's ability is measured through Synchro Canada's Star Award Program. All swimmers across the country who are interested in competing must qualify through this system. More information is available at the Synchro Ontario website <http://www.synchroontario.com/>.

The Competitive Tiers are as follows:

**Competition Level Swimmers are required to have passed**

Tier 1	Star 3
Tier 2	Star 5
Tier 3	Star 7
Tier 4	Star 9
Tier 5	Superstar 1
Tier 6	Superstar 3
Tier 7	Superstar 5

## **SWIMMER COMMITMENT**

**Attendance and participation at all practices is mandatory.** If an absence is known ahead of time, please inform your coach. If you are sick or will be late, please inform your coach as soon as possible prior to practice via email or by phone.

**All swimmers must be on time for practice.** Swimmers should be on deck and ready at least 10 minutes before practice is to begin.

You will be provided with a practice schedule at the beginning of the year which outlines team holidays and breaks. When a competition is scheduled during or shortly after a holiday, swimmers may be required to attend practice during those holidays.

Swimmers are expected to treat coaches, teammates, pool staff and club volunteers with respect and to abide by the TSSC and Synchro Ontario Code of Conduct (see page 7). Swimmers must represent the TSSC club in a positive manner at all competitions.

Registration in the competitive level indicates a willingness on the swimmer's part to participate fully in the entire year's program. Participation includes aspects such as attitude, attendance, effort, etc. Consequences to swimmers for non-participation may include a verbal warning, followed by a letter home and discussion with parents, followed by movement within the team to alternate status and in some cases, dismissal from the team.

## **PARENT COMMITMENT**

The most important responsibility of parents is to support and encourage their daughters as they develop their synchronized swimming skills and routines. Please ensure that your child attends and is punctual for practice. Please assist your child by ensuring she has all the necessary gear and nutritious snacks and bottled water for each practice.

Parents are always welcome to observe practices from the pool gallery, but please do not interrupt a practice session to speak to your daughter's coach unless it is an emergency.

Should you wish to speak with your daughter's coach regarding the program or club, you can contact them via email or make an arrangement to meet after practice. For subjects of a sensitive nature or concerns about your child's performance or training routines, we kindly ask parents not to approach the coach on the pool deck, but to make arrangements to speak with the coach in person, in a more private setting. This will ensure the matter is addressed with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.

Policy concerns should be addressed to the Head Coach and/or any member of the Board of Directors.

## **Volunteering**

The Club is a volunteer-run organization. You may have a skill that the club can use! We need the help of ALL members in some volunteer capacity. Opportunities this year include acting as team parents, meet chaperones, car-pooling, and organizing or participating in fundraising events and social events such as the Christmas Watershow and party, and the Year End Watershow and party. If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please approach one of the club presidents. Clubs may also be expected to provide volunteers to assist at meets hosted by Synchro Ontario.

Parents who are interested in becoming more involved in the sport may also take judging courses through Synchro Ontario, or join various committees through Synchro Ontario. All judges, officials and meet managers are volunteers, at all levels of the sport.

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising is critical to the continued proper operation of the club. While there is no compulsory participation in the fundraising activities for the 2007/08 swim year, we strongly encourage all parents and swimmers to participate in any planned activities which may include poinsettia sales, water show activities and swim-a-thons. Fundraising events provide a team building experience for the swimmers and parents and also help to increase public awareness of our sport and club.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Swimmers' fees cover the costs of pool rental, coaching salaries, meet entry fees, membership in Synchro Canada and Synchro Ontario, professional mixing of music tapes for competition, and coaches' accommodations at away meets. All fees are pro-rated for the number hours of swimming per week. There will be an additional fee for duet/solo routines. The fees for 2007/08 will be confirmed by the Club members at the Annual General Meeting.

A \$300 deposit is due at time of registration and will be applied to the Annual fees, which are payable in several installments. A fee schedule and options for payment will be issued for each swimmer in the fall, once team placements have been finalized.

Should circumstances arise that make it impossible for your child to participate in the program, the deposit will be refunded less a \$30 administration fee upon receipt of a written request to the TSSC Board no later than one week after team schedules have been posted. Any changes in the number of registered swimmers will necessitate a fee adjustment for other team members. Annual fees are not refundable.

Any cheques returned due to insufficient funds or for any other reason, are to be resubmitted by the parent in cash or by certified cheque within 5 business days of notification from the Club, together with a service charge of \$30.00. All fees and invoices must be paid on time; otherwise, your daughter may not be allowed to participate in practices or competitions until the outstanding balances are cleared.

Requests for special consideration or an alternate payment schedule due to financial circumstances must be directed to and determined by the Treasurer and the President of the Board of Directors of the Club.

## **Bursary Fund**

In 2004/05 the club instituted a bursary fund for families who require financial assistance. Ten per cent of all funds generated through fundraising events or special grants will be allocated to the bursary fund. Requests should be directed to the Club Treasurer.

## **UNIFORMS AND SUPPLIES**

Swimmers in our competitive division require the following:

- Black bathing suit and white cap – to be worn for figure competitions
- Blue Toronto Synchro club suit and blue bathing cap – to be worn for spacing (rehearsal) at competitions
- Routine Team bathing suit and headpiece
- Club Track suit
- Club T-shirt

For all practices, swimmers need a bathing suit, cap, goggles, and a nose clip. (Extra nose clips should be kept in the swimmer's knapsack.) Shorts may be worn for stretching, but not sweat pants. Street shoes are not allowed on the pool deck, but we encourage the use of deck shoes. For safety reasons, bathing caps must be worn at all times in the water; long hair must be in a ponytail. Figure and spacing bathing suits can only be worn during competition or with the approval of the swimmers respective coach.

Parents are responsible for the cost of the above listed items at the time the order is placed. This amount is payable by cash or cheque. Parents will be informed of a uniform day when the items will be sized and ordered. The club will attempt to arrange for a clothing exchange from swimmers who have outgrown their tracksuits etc. Moreover, as the design and fabric of the routine suit cannot be decided until a later date this cost will be invoiced separately upon delivery.

Swimmers may also order team bags, parkas, deck shoes, shorts, etc - these items are optional. More information will follow.

The Club has arranged for a discount from OmniSwim at Unit 11, 1085 Bellamy Road in Scarborough. (416-431-3334 Website <[www.omnismwim.com](http://www.omnismwim.com)>) Members of the Toronto Synchro Club will receive a 15% discount.

## **SWIM MEETS AND COMPETITIONS**

All members of the team must participate in all designated competitions. In some circumstances a team may have a swimmer designated as the alternate; the alternate is expected to attend the competitions.

The club will participate in both home meets/demonstrations and meets in other locations. Meets vary in length from one to several days. Some competitions will require overnight stays and will result in additional expenses for travel, accommodation and food.

### **Behaviour**

Each athlete and coach of the TSSC is expected to represent the club by exhibiting good behaviour and sportsmanship at all times. If a swimmer must leave the meet facilities for any reason, the coach must be advised in advance to ensure there is no conflict with swim times, spacing or dry land drills. In these situations the swimmer must be accompanied by their parent/meet chaperone.

### **Illegal Drugs and/or Alcohol**

When representing the club, any swimmer found to have illegal drugs, alcohol and/or tobacco in their possession will be subject to immediate and severe reprimand. This behaviour could result in suspension from the team. Parents will be notified and are responsible for any expenses incurred. Depending on the offence, the coach may:

- Suspend the swimmer from social events connected with the meet
- Suspend the swimmer from the meet
- Send the swimmer home (the expense to do so will be the responsibility of the swimmer/parent)
- If the offence is severe enough, the swimmer may be expelled from the club.

## **Meals**

Swimmers are required to bring a nutritious lunch and snacks to ensure they are available for impromptu dry land drills and instructions.

Swimmers may be asked to refrain from eating foods which may cause stomach upset or discomfort and jeopardize their performance or well being during competitions (i.e. carbonated drinks, junk or fried foods, candy). If there are any special dietary considerations, parents must inform the swimmer's coach and meet chaperone.

## **Dress Code**

Swimmers are representing TSSC and are required to dress as instructed by their coach to present a good image for the team. Team tracksuits are required when travelling at all times unless otherwise instructed by the Head Coach.

The dress code on deck will be determined by the coach.

## **Travel and Accommodations**

***In-town Meets*** Transportation for in-town meets is the responsibility of each family. Swimmers are responsible for their own food expenses and are expected to bring/purchase nutritious snacks and meals.

***Out-of-town Meets*** Transportation for out-of-town meets may be by bus or train with each swimmer absorbing the shared cost. If a small group is going, or the distance is considered acceptable, then transportation may be by personal vehicle with each swimmer/parent absorbing their own costs.

Swimmers will usually be accommodated in hotel rooms. Rooms will be reserved by the club as far in advance as possible, taking advantage of any group rates available. All information will be provided to parents as soon as it becomes available. Swimmers/parents are responsible for all expenses associated with the room and meals. Meet Chaperones will arrange for the meals and snacks. If a team meal is planned, all swimmers are expected to attend.

Although one or more chaperones will be assigned to each team, swimmers under the age of 12 must be accompanied by their parent/guardian and book accommodations in the TSSC chosen hotel. If this is not possible arrangements must be made with the Head Coach and the Meet Chaperone at least 14 days prior to the event to ensure all needs can be accommodated. For swimmers not accompanied by their parents, rooming lists will be established by the coach.

## **Club-paid Coaches**

The Club covers the costs of the following for approved coaches attending an overnight meet on behalf of the Club:

- Travel Expenses
  - Air/bus/train ticket
  - Mileage
- Accommodation – hotel room and taxes. Any personal expenses such as personal phone calls, room service, etc. will be the responsibility of the coach. It is expected that coaches will share a room.
- on-deck coaching hours

## **Meet Chaperone Paid Expenses**

As meet chaperones, parents have volunteered their time to supervise the swimmers for the duration of the meet, 50% of their hotel room cost (not including personal phone calls, room service etc.) will be divided amongst the respective team members. It is expected that, when possible, meet chaperones will share accommodations.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The code of conduct is designed to promote the goals of the TSSC which are to provide swimmers with opportunities for both physical and personal development in an environment that is both challenging and fun. Participants can expect to enjoy leadership, skill and performance enhancement, and find a supportive social and team experience.

TSSC believes that all people involved, including coaches, parents, and spectators should lead by example, by acting in a positive and appropriate manner at all times, as well as promoting the fundamentally positive aspects of sports such as excellence, effort, and integrity.

They are also expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the values of Synchro Ontario. Conduct that violates this Code of Conduct may be subject to sanctions pursuant to Synchro Ontario's policies related to discipline and complaints.

If parents or swimmers have a concern that they have been unable to resolve with the team coach, they should contact the Head Coach who is responsible for the teams and her staff. The Head Coach will listen to the information presented and collect the information needed from all parties. When necessary, she will meet with the coach, swimmer, and parent to work out a resolution, while keeping in mind that the needs of the team must always be recognized. If a solution cannot be found, the Head Coach will contact the Board of Directors who will mediate a resolution.

If a coach has a concern regarding a swimmer, she will speak with the swimmer privately about the concern, the desired goal or outcome, and a reasonable time in which to make the requested changes. The coach will communicate this to the Head Coach, and she may ask her to sit in on the meeting. If the swimmer is unable to achieve the required goal, the coach will discuss this with the parent and inform the Head Coach. If the swimmer is still unable to fulfil the request for change, a meeting with the swimmer, parent, coach, Head Coach and member of the Board may be necessary.

If a coach has a concern that she has been unable to resolve with a parent, she will inform the Head Coach and request a meeting with the parent and the Head Coach to resolve the matter. If a solution cannot be found within a reasonable time, the Head Coach will inform the Board of Directors and a member of the Board will assist.

The Board of Directors is responsible for the well-being of the staff, swimmers and the reputation of the club. When matters arise which have an impact on the TSSC, on the community, on other team members or their families, it is the responsibility of the Head Coach to inform the Board of Directors who will respect confidentiality.

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The TSSC prohibits discrimination and harassment and protects the right of all members to be free of hate activity, based on age, ancestry, citizenship, creed (religion), colour, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, level of literacy, marital status, place of origin, membership in a union or staff association, political affiliation, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristics by or within the organization.

The TSSC upholds equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies by which discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, colour, national origin, political or religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family relationship and disability is prohibited by and within the organization.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Voice messages may be left for the Head Coach at the Club phone number: (647) 285-4934. The Head Coach is responsible for checking the phone messages and she will pass on messages to other coaches. If you need to reach someone while they are at the pool, or in case of an emergency, the pool office number at U of T is (416)-978-4680.

A Club roster of swimmers and coaches will be prepared and distributed once registration is completed. This can be used to help arrange car pools and transportation to practices. Please inform the Club of any change to your address, phone number or email address.

The Club also has a web site, [www.torontosynchro.com](http://www.torontosynchro.com) , and the Club e-mail address is [mail@torontosynchro.com](mailto:mail@torontosynchro.com). The Head Coach will respond or forward messages to the appropriate person. Please check the website for updated club information.

A Comment/Suggestion folder is posted on the TSSC bulletin board on the 50m pool deck. Parents, swimmers and coaches who wish to make comments, suggestions or give feedback may put their thoughts down in writing and leave it in the folder. Messages will be picked up by the Head Coach and discussed with the coaches and/or at board meetings. If a parent, swimmer or coach wishes to receive feedback, they should indicate that they would like a 'personal reply'.

A monthly calendar is prepared for each team listing practice times, any cancellations, special events, and meets. It will be posted on the website at the end of the previous month.

Coaches often provide handouts at practices. Please check with your swimmer if they have received anything after practice and take the time to read the information. Papers tend to get lost at the bottom of swim bags!

From time to time coaches will have team meetings with parents and/or the swimmers. They will provide as much notice as possible for parent meetings which are usually held at the end of a practice.

Here's to a great year!!!