



SwimZone Racing

Parent's Introductory
Handbook

www.swimzoneracing.co.nz

SwimZone Racing Parent's Handbook

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Dear Parent

Welcome to SwimZone Racing!

This organisation has been established to primarily assist and foster the development of competitive swimmers in the Hutt Valley. The focus of the coaches, administrators and swimmers will be to strive for and attain a higher level of success in competitive swimming.

Do I have to be a member of a club to race at competitions?

To enter into a competition swim race, the swimmer must be affiliated to an amateur swim club. This club must be registered to the New Zealand Swimming Federation. SwimZone Racing is an amateur swim club registered with Swimming New Zealand. Members will be able to enter designated swim meets and compete for SwimZone Racing.

Can anybody be a member of SwimZone Racing?

Membership is open only to those who participate in the SwimZone training programme and whose aim it is to be a competitive swimmer, parents or supporters (Associate Membership), or those who have contributed a large amount of time and effort to foster competitive swimming through the club (Life Members).

We are not a learn-to-swim club. We are a **TEAM** of competitive swimmers. Our aim is to be one of the **TOP 10** clubs in **New Zealand**.

How do I join?

If you haven't already registered to become a member of SwimZone Racing, please complete the registration form which can be downloaded and printed from our website (www.Swimzoneracing.co.nz). The annual fees for the 1 July – 30 June period cover the annual fee for Wellington Swimming, Swimming New Zealand, as well as membership for SwimZone Racing. A registration form must be completed for each swimmer each year.

OBJECTIVE AND PHILOSOPHY

The objective of the SwimZone Racing is to provide the resources, programme structure and environment that will enable and encourage swimmers to attain their maximum potential in competitive swimming. The programme focus will be directed towards the highest level of national and international competition and the development programme is designed with this career-oriented goal as the basic impetus.

Each athlete will be encouraged

"To Be the Best They Can Be"

In their individual pursuit of excellence.

The philosophy behind this is that the team will always strive for perfection, and in doing so, the attributes learnt such as desire, discipline, determination, commitment, confidence and high self-esteem, will better prepare individuals to successfully encounter the challenge presented in both their careers as a swimmer and in other aspects of their lives beyond swimming.

With these in mind we have developed the following mission statement, set our vision, and identified our values.

Mission

To develop competitive swimmers in the Hutt Valley by providing the resources and pathways that enable swimmers to reach their maximum potential.

Vision

SwimZone Racing will be the number 1 club in the Wellington region and a top 10 competitive club in New Zealand, with national representative swimmers, administrators, and quality coaches.

Values

As a competitive swimming club, there are certain traits that we would like our swimmers to exhibit. To help develop these, we hope to instill these values in our swimmers:

- Character and discipline
- Team Spirit
- Competitiveness and mental toughness
- Hard work and commitment

CLUB STRUCTURE

SwimZone Racing is a competitive swimming club with over 100 members. The club works in synergy with Swimzone which is our club coaches swimming business. Swimzone Racing (the club) does not employ coaches. Swimzone (the business) has a contract with the Hutt City Council to be the sole provider of professional swim coaching at Naenae and Stokes Valley Pools.

Who do I pay my fees to?

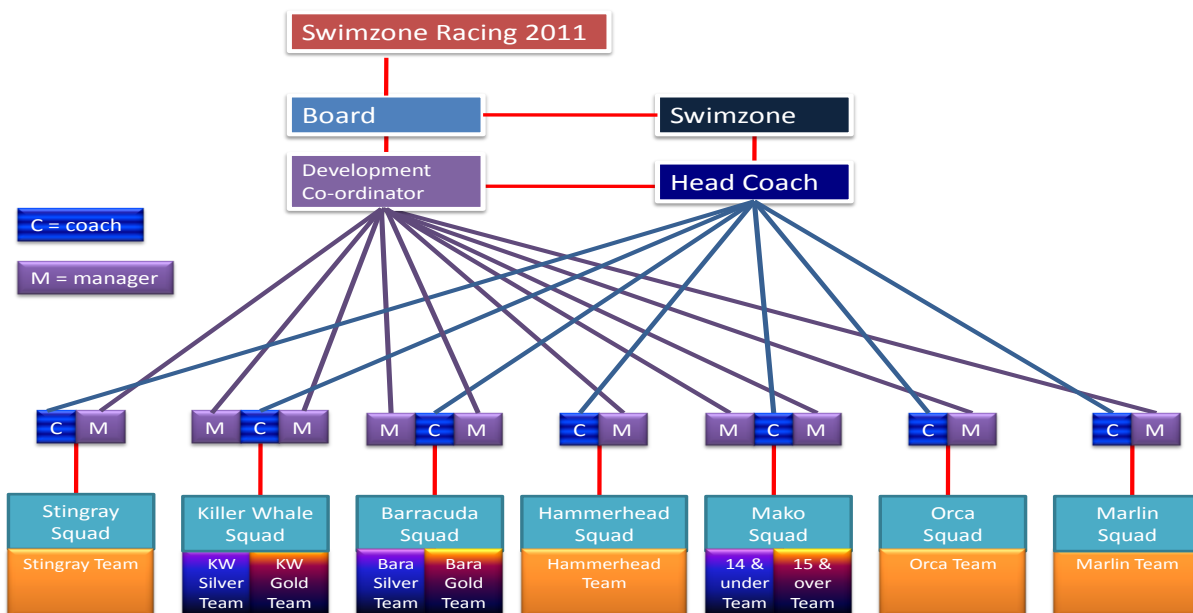
SwimZone Racing (the club) and Swimzone (the business) are in partnership to provide a competitive swimming programme in the Hutt Valley, with swimmers paying a membership fee to Swimzone Racing and coaching fees to Swimzone.

Who is in charge of the club?

SwimZone Racing (the club) has a board of directors who are elected each year at the AGM. The task of the board is to ensure the club is successful and financial.

How are the teams set up?

The swimmers in Swimzone Racing are all members of teams which are based on the training squads. There are presently nine teams in the club. Each team has a coach and a manager. The managers are part of a subcommittee chaired by the development co-ordinator who is a member of the board. As a new swimmer to our club you will initially join our new entrance team/ stingray team. As swimmers become more competitive they will be invited to move to a team that is appropriate for them. For more information on the teams please see the Swimzone Racing website.



Being a Swimming Parent

As a parent of a swimmer, you may have a lot of questions. Swimming New Zealand has produced a parent handbook with some very valuable information. This can be found on their website www.swimmingnz.org.nz. We have put some of that information here.

How can I help my child to succeed in swimming?

Your primary role as a swim parent is to provide a supportive, loving and stable environment in which your child can develop as both an athlete and a good person. As a parent, you know how important it is to be a positive role model; children feel your emotions. We encourage you to always demonstrate to your child good sportsmanship towards all those involved in the sport. This includes team-mates, coaches, officials, opponents, and supporters.

What can I do to help my child develop into an athlete?

When we first start out in swimming, the focus is on the development of skills that will allow the swimmer to become more competitive. 'Winning' isn't the most critical skill the child learns. It is important to remember this because an obsession with winning can create a fear of failure, which can result in a less than average performance and a very upset child. Be careful with the language that you use when talking about the performance of a child. Rewarding a swimmer for 'winning' has the implication that if they hadn't won they wouldn't be as good. A comment such as, 'That was a great effort,' can be used regardless of the outcome of the race.

What is the coach's job?

One of the most difficult jobs that you can do as a parent is let the coach, coach. Your job as a parent is to support, encourage, and recognise your child's efforts. It is the coach's job to offer your child constructive analysis on their swimming. That is what they are trained to do. When parents attempt to coach their child, the child may become confused and it can become difficult for the coach to establish best practices that will enable the swimmer to move forward. It is equally important to never undermine the coach in front of the swimmer. If you have an issue with the coaching, see the coach, but leave the coaching to the coach.

Can I help with goal setting?

Swimming is a sport that is based on time; the swimmer is ultimately racing to get a better time than they had in the past. To help your child plot a course where they will continue to see success in the pool, it is important for them to see where they should be aiming: a personal best (PB), a qualifying time, a New Zealand record. All of this information can be found on www.takeyourmarks.com a website that collates times. Please take some time to join this website as it will make your goal setting more realistic and easier.

SWIM MEETS

Swim meets give swimmers the opportunity to put into practice all those things the coach has been telling them to do. For many swimmers, the swim meets are the 'fun' bit of swimming. These pages will give you some information about the types of meets you are likely to be involved in, how you find out about these meets, and what to do once you get there.

Are there different types of competitions?

There are 3 main types of meets that you might be involved in. Initially we suggest taking part in a Timezone. However you may also be involved in other meets around the Wellington region (the signature meets) or you may be involved in the Wellington Championships.

TIMEZONE

A Timezone is like an official swim meet (it has official starters, referees, inspectors of turns, timekeepers, etc) but this event is only for SwimZone Racing members. When you participate in a Timezone event you will only be competing against members of our own club.

Why do we have Timezones?

- These events allow swimmers to gain an official recorded time for their chosen events. There are no qualifying times to meet so anybody can swim.
- To allow swimmers to gauge where they are at compared to other swimmers.
- To give the opportunity for swimmers to beat their personal best (PB) times.
- To raise funds for the club. These cost \$5 to enter and you can swim a maximum of 3 events.

When do we have Timezones?

- These are held every 4-6 weeks on a Friday night. A schedule of Timezones can be found on the notice board at Naenae Pool. Warm up is at 4:30 for a 5:00 start and the meet is usually completed by 6:30.

Format

- When your swimmer arrives at the pool they need to go to the entry area (on the Zoom tube side of the pool in the deep end) to pay their entry and get a competition number written on their arm.

- The coaches set a programme and marshall the events for the night. Swimmers will race against those at a similar level according to times. Swimmers without times are generally raced together.
- Swimmers can swim in any three race events they like (sometimes the longer events are restricted to the more experienced swimmers). When swimmers first start they usually swim the 25m and 50m races.
- The events swum at Timzones change from Timezone to Timezone to allow swimmers to get times for a wide range of events.
- To be able to officially record times at the Timezones we need to have a full set of officials. The officials are basically parents of the swimmers. We cannot hold these events without parental involvement (see section on parental involvement). You may be approached to be a timekeeper at these events. This is an easy task and you will be given instructions of what to do. Please accept the challenge and help out at the timezones if asked. Better still why not volunteer when you pay your entry! We are always looking for timekeepers on the day!

SIGNATURE EVENTS

These meets are held throughout the Wellington region and are hosted by individual Wellington swimming clubs. These meets are coordinated through the Wellington Swimming Association.

When hosting a signature meet, a club is responsible for coordinating: officials, runners, food assistants, door stewards, medal bearers, and raffles. Clubs use these meets as major fund-raisers.

Although there are no qualifying times for these meets swimmers need to have a time to enter. Swimmers can get times at the Timezones.

WELLINGTON CHAMPIONSHIPS

These regional meets occur in the summer (mid-January) and winter (Aug/Sept). This event showcases the Wellington talent of swimming. Clubs are responsible for nominating officials for these meets as well as being responsible for some sessions of the meet. If a club is responsible for a session, they need to supply: runners, door stewards, medal bearers, and food assistants.

Swimmers need to qualify to swim at these events. Qualifying times are published by the Wellington Swimming Association in their annually updated booklet which you will receive when you join the club.

How do I find out about what swim meets are coming up?

Flyers for upcoming swim meets are put on our website www.SwimZoneracing.co.nz and on our club notice board (the glass case at the deep end of the pool on the changing room's side). The flyers give information on

- The type of meet (see types of competition section above)
- The pool set up - long-course (LC - 50m pool) or short-course (SC -25 m pool)
- The events being swum – strokes and distances (e.g. 100m freestyle)
- If there are qualifying times and what they are
- The closing date by which the **club** must enter the swimmers. Note - this is not the date that swimmers must enter – there is a separate earlier closing date for swimmers to get entries to our race secretary.
- The cost of entry. This is usually a fee per event that you must pay the club.

Your team coach and/or manager will let you know about meets that swimmers from your team should enter and we would encourage all swimmers to enter those meets if at all possible. These will differ depending on what team you are in. When swimmers first start it is important for them to enter Timezones and our club's Signature meets. All swimmers should be aiming to qualify for the Wellington Champs

There will be other meets that occur during the year. You can enter your child in any competition (as long as they meet the entry criteria) that they want to swim in.

How do I know what events to enter my child in?

Your team coach and/or manager can advise you and your swimmer as to what events they should enter. Please do not be afraid to ask them for guidance if you haven't been given any information.

To start with swimmers usually enter 50m events in as many strokes as they are able to swim.

How do I enter my child in a meet?

You must enter a meet **via our club race secretary**. You cannot enter any meet directly with the club hosting the meet.

First step is to complete an entry form. Entry forms are kept beside the club notice board, or can be downloaded and printed from our website: www.SwimZoneracing.co.nz. You can also enter online via the website.

Completed entry forms, together with fees, are to be put in the entries box beside the notice board by the due date listed on the board or meet entries can be completed and submitted online at our website or emailed to the Race Secretary. – Please note that our closing date is different to that listed on the Wellington Swimming Association website or on the club flyer.

The entry fees must be paid to **our club treasurer** prior to the meet (i.e. you cannot pay the actual club running the meet -it must go through Swimzone Racing). This can be done either by:

- Putting the money (cheques should be made out to Swimzone Racing) into the entries box at Naenae Pool with a hard copy of your entry form or

- Direct credit to the club race entries account. Please contact the club treasurer (treasurer@swimzoneracing.co.nz) for further information if you prefer this method of payment.

Entries cannot be accepted without the correct fee.

Late entries cannot be accepted

Once you have submitted your entry the following procedure occurs:

A few days after the club closing date a preliminary list of our entries will be posted on the website. It is important for you to check this to be sure your child has been entered as the race secretary may have over a hundred children to enter in a meet and errors can occur. If your swimmer is not listed and you think they should be, or they are not in the correct events then you must contact the Race Secretary ASAP so they can correct the entries.

Once the organizing club receives the entries, swimmers are ranked according to their times. A preliminary PSYCH SHEET is put on our website.

This is the last chance to check that entries are correct.

What if my child needs to withdraw from the meet?

If you find you can't attend a meet after entering it, please advise the Race Secretary as soon as possible to scratch your entry.

If you scratch before the psych sheets are published you will receive a [credit added to your race entry account which you can use for your next swim meet entry fee](#). If you scratch after the psych sheets are published then you will not be refunded for the event. For Wellington Swimming Association, Swimming New Zealand Meets and some club meets a **NO SHOW** may incur a financial penalty in addition to the entry fees which will be billed to the swimmer.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A MEET?

10 Steps for a Successful Swimming Meet – the swimmer

This section outlines the 10 steps that will help to ensure success when going to a swimming meets.

1. Be prepared for the meet. Make sure you have everything ready the night before you go to the event (sometimes these meets start early in the morning and you might not have time to get things ready)
 - Your racing togs - usually when you start racing you just swim in the same togs that you train in. Many more experienced swimmers have special togs they race in. They may warm up in their training togs at the meet and then get into their race togs.
 - Goggles – it is a good idea to have a spare pair and make sure they are nice and tight so they stay on in your race.
 - Swimzone racing cap – most swimmers swim with goggles and a racing cap. As a new Swimzone Racing member your first club cap is free. All subsequent caps are \$15 and can be purchased at the meet from the team manager. You do not need to wear a cap and probably in a meet is not the best time to try one for the **first** time. As you get better you will go faster with a bathing cap and should think about wearing one. If you are wearing a cap in a swim meet it should be a Swimzone racing one.
 - A few towels.
 - Healthy snacks – see the nutrition section on our website
2. Report to the team manager when you arrive. Make sure you arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of warm up. This will ensure you have time to report and get changed. The manager will tell you what event, heat and lane you are in. You can have this written on your hand if you like.
3. Warm up is usually for half an hour prior to the meet starting (plus another 15 minutes for the officials to get ready for the start of racing). The warm up will be run by the coach and can be very crowded. Make sure you check which lane you need to warm up in. The main reasons for warming up are:
 - To prepare yourself for racing
 - To stretch your body
 - To get a feel for the water and the pool
 - To help settle your nerves
4. Sit with the team and wait for the team manager to send you over to marshalling. Marshalling is where the swimmers assemble before each event. At the marshalling area an event and heat number flip chart indicates to swimmers and team managers which events and heats are required to go to the marshalling area. Your team manager is responsible for getting swimmers to the marshalling area at the right time. This could be 15-30 minutes before

the race time noted on the programme. (It could be earlier if the meet is running ahead of schedule.) **DON'T RELY ON THE TIMES IN THE PROGRAMME.**

5. The marshal will assemble the swimmers into their event. They will tell the swimmers what lane they are in and make sure they are seated in the right order. You will then be sent to the start when necessary.
6. At the starting area, make sure you are in the lane the marshal put you in. You can check with the timekeepers that you are in the right lane.
7. When the whistle blows, the swimmer steps onto the blocks and prepares for the dive (or gets into the water and prepares for the start if the event is backstroke).
8. When the starter says, 'Take your marks', get into the ready position and pause for the start. If you don't pause, you might get disqualified.
9. You can go when you hear the starting 'gun'. The start of the race can be a gun, whistle, hooter, or other electronic noise. Listen to the races before yours so you know what the start will sound like.
10. When the race is finished, stay in the water till the referee either indicates you can exit the pool with a whistle or (more commonly) after the next race has been started. Where it is 'over the top' starts, the referee will start the next race while the previous races swimmers are still in the water. Swimmers stay back from the end of the pool and keep to the side of the lane until the next race has been started. Exit the pool either at the end or to the side of the pool (if there are electronic touch pads) once the next race has begun. You should also ask the timekeeper for your time when you are finished and let the coach know what your time was.

7 Steps for a Successful Swimming Meet – the parent

1. Ensure your swimmer arrives at the pool on time and with the appropriate gear.
2. There is usually a small entrance fee for spectators which you pay at the door. The swimmers do not pay. You can also purchase a programme at the door. The programme is very helpful as it is the only way to follow what is going on during the meet. There is no entry fee or programme at Timezones.
3. Deliver and introduce your swimmer to the team manager. They and the coach will take care of your swimmer and make sure they are in the right place at the right time and know what to do although it would be useful if you go over the 10 steps for a successful swim meet (above) with your swimmer.
4. Find a seat. Seating during meets is at a premium. In meets at Naenae pool parents can generally sit anywhere they can find a spot and often parents sit near or with the swimmers. In the larger swim meets at the Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre, such as Wellington Champs, seating is allocated for the swimmers. Parents are expected to sit in the spectator's area which is not with the swimmers.

5. Swimming, as for most sports, has various rules and regulations that are applied at a swimming competition. These rules have to be enforced by the swimming officials for **all** swimmers in **all** races **regardless of age or experience**. This is the case even at our Timezones. It is better for swimmers to be disqualified in a Timezone than at a major competition. Sometimes it can seem harsh when a young swimmer is not allowed to swim in a race or is disqualified because they have broken one of these rules (especially when it seems the swimmer may not have been aware of the rule). It is important for young swimmers to learn these rules early (their coaches will tell them what they are). As sad as you feel as a parent for your (or another child) if they are not allowed to swim or disqualified, it is even harder for the swimming officials to have to enforce these rules and regulations on young children. The officials have no choice. No discretion is allowed from the officials – the rules are the rules. Remember that the swimming officials are (or have been) parents and are **volunteering** their time. Please always be respectful and appreciative of them and be supportive when they have to make these difficult decisions.
6. Be positive and encourage the swimmers.
7. Have fun watching the action!
8. You can take your swimmer home after their last event.

Hopefully this explains what to do at the competitions. If you do still have questions, ask the coach or the team manager for your child's team.

UNIFORM

Club members are encouraged to wear the SwimZone uniform when representing the club at competitions (at least the shirt). The uniform can be ordered from through the website.

Wearing caps when racing is important for a few reasons. Firstly it allows swimmers to be easily identified when swimming. Secondly it reduces drag, thereby increasing a swimmers speed. If you need a SwimZone cap, ask the team manager or your coach.

The Club uniform consists of (see website for a current price list):

- Navy blue and green shirt
- Navy blue hoodie
- Navy blue green jacket
- Track suit pants
- Silicone caps- these are available from the team managers at meet

OFFICIALS

When you become a swimming family you enter into a sport that cannot exist without your help. There is an expectation from the club that all parents will volunteer from time to time to enable us to function as a great swim club.

Does this mean I have to do something to help?

In a word – YES. The meets are all run by volunteers – i.e. parents, like you. We encourage all our parents, at an early stage, to get involved. Quite simply, if there are not sufficient officials, we will not be able to hold swimming meets and the swimmers will suffer.

One of the board positions is an Official's Coordinator. It is this person's job to ensure that swim meets have all the officials needed in order to run.

So what can I do to get started?

- Time keep at TIMEZONES. This is a simple task and instruction will be given on the day. You don't need to ring ahead to be a timekeeper, just offer your help when you arrive. Remember these meets aren't very long and you will get a good seat to watch the race if you are a timekeeper.
- At our club signature meets. There are a lot more jobs to do at these events because they are open to swimmers from the Wellington Region. Some of these jobs require some knowledge about swimming in order to do them. Ask which job you are doing and if you don't know what the job entails, ASK. Some of the jobs you may be asked to do are:
 - Be on refreshments – these people take refreshments to the officials on the deck
 - Be a runner– these people collect times from the timekeeper and take them to the recording desk
 - Help at the door– these people take the money for entrance at the door, sell programs and raffle tickets
 - Time keep once you have had a few turns doing this at a Timezone
 - Marshal – these people organize the swimmers into the correct order for their races instruction will be given to you if it is your first time
- Once you have been to a few meets and had a turn at timekeeping consider training for further official positions. More information about these positions can be found in the Parent Handbook on the Swimming NZ website.
- After you have been to one swim meet it would be great if you could volunteer for jobs at your next swim meet rather than waiting to be asked as this is a big job for the official coordinator. On the meet entry forms there is a box for you to write in what you are happy to volunteer for.

WEBSITES

- www.SwimZoneracing.co.nz– this is the club website where you can find the latest information about up and coming meets, results, entry forms for meets. The website is now being updated so it is worth looking at for information.
- www.SwimZone.co.nz – this is the club coaches website where you can find information about training times and equipment
- www.takeyourmarks.com - Take Your Marks (TYM) is a website where competitive swimmers can:

- record meet results,
- store and maintain your best times,
- find your XLR8 points ranking
- set goal times,
- graph your results, and
- convert times from long to short course (and back)

(Note – Swimming New Zealand have made TYM the official repository for all New Zealand swim meet results)

- www.swimmingnz.org.nz - this is the swim NZ website and provides you with all national and international swimming information as well as links to other swim sites
- www.swimwn.co.nz - this is the Wellington Swimming Association website with all local and regional event flyers and results. It is important to remember that the closing date on these flyers is for our club to enter – and your entries must be to the club as the date indicated either on the notice board at the pool or on our website

NEED MORE HELP?

The names and emails of the current board and team managers are on the clubs website. If you require more information about anything to do with Swimzone Racing please do not hesitate to contact your team manager or a board member. We have all been where you are! We remember what it was like just learning our way and are really keen to give you all the help you need!



New Members Checklist

- Got the Swimzone Racing Parent Introductory Handbook.
- Complete an application to register as a member – see website for form.
- Uniform
 - Club uniform should be worn to swim meets. (T-shirts).
 - Check with your Team Manager for pricing, next order date or if any in stock (a small number of T-shirts may be available).
- Swim Cap – Should be worn at swim meets. SZR cap available at the swim meets from the meet team manager (\$15)
- Goggles: Naenae pool has them, or see John
- Fins: Check with your coach for what you need
- Entering swim meets: Check on website or at deep end of Naenae pool for upcoming meets. Enter & Pay via online banking or via box at Naenae pool. Don't forget to volunteer your help. Learn how to time keep
- Take your marks – register so you can track your child's progress. See www.takeyourmarks.com
- XLR8 – check it out – see separate flyer