

Role of the Coach

The coaches are aquatic professionals and serve as positive role models. The job of the coach is to provide a program for children that will enable the swimmers in their charge *"to be the best they can be."* The coaching staff is responsible for:

- Designing a training program that is appropriate and conducive to the level of the swimmer. Each group's practices and objectives are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
- Determining the meet schedule and objectives for the meet
- Conducting and supervising warm-up procedures for the team at meets.
- Assisting the swimmer in setting realistic goals and guiding the swimmer towards their goals.
- Evaluating and analyzing practice and meet performance, providing necessary instruction and feedback to enhance performance.
- Communicating with the swimmers and parents by educating and listening.
- Determining the rules of conduct and disciplinary matters. In all areas of swimmer conduct and discipline, at practice and meets, the coach is the final authority.
- Determining practice group objectives and selection criteria and placing swimmers in practice groups appropriate to their age and ability.

Role of the Swimmer

The swimmer athlete is responsible for choosing to participate in the sport and for deciding what he or she desires to accomplish in swimming. The motivation *"to be the best they can be"* must start with the swimmer. In general, the role of the swimmer includes:

- Cooperating with the coaching staff at all times.
- Respecting their teammates and coaches to contribute to a positive practice and team environment.
- Conducting themselves as athletes and representatives of BBSC.
- Resolving problems in a respectful manner and talking to the coach about any problems.
- Maintaining the requirements of the practice group.
- Following practice and meet guidelines.
- Learning to take responsibility for their swimming.
- Eating a well balanced diet by maintaining proper fluid intake and following nutrition guidelines (see Good Nutrition for Better Performances under Peak Performance Guidelines).
- Learning how to set meaningful goals and maintaining a commitment level that is consistent with their goals.
- Communicating with coach and parents.

Practice Guidelines for swimmers

Be ready to begin practice at the designated time. Inform the coach before practice start if you need to be dismissed early from practice.

Bring proper practice equipment (kick board, pull buoy, etc) - your coach will provide a list of the equipment appropriate to the group level. Put equipment away after practice.

Listen attentively to the coach while receiving instructions.

Perform technique drills and training sets correctly.

Perform practice sets correctly and at the proper level of effort.

The use of foul language, derogatory statements towards teammates and coaches, uncooperativeness, fighting, disruption during practice, chronic complaining, or any other unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for immediate dismissal from practice. Parents will be informed as soon as possible after practice.

Role of the Parent

The parent is responsible for the development of the child. Most parents have their children involved with youth sports because their children want to participate in the sport and they recognize the benefits that these programs provide for their children. Research done on youth sports found that parental involvement plays a key role in shaping their child's athletic activities and attitudes. Providing the necessary support for the child to "*be the best they can be*" in swimming is one of the vital roles of the parent. The parent is the #1 Fan of the swimmer. Parent's responsibilities fall into several categories. They include:

Practice Guidelines for Parents

Parents are welcome to remain and watch the practice session. Please keep in mind the following:

- The practice session is a learning situation and the swimmer needs to be able to concentrate.
- Please stay clear of the immediate practice area and do not talk to your child during practice.
- Coaches have a plan for every practice and may emphasize some aspects to the exclusion of others.
- Leave the coaching to the coach. Avoid analyzing your child's practice performance or instructing your child in swimming. Please leave the stopwatches at home.
- When a coach is in the process of handling practice, please do not interfere. If you wish to speak to the coach, please contact them before and after practice, or via the telephone.
- Please have your child at practice on time (or earlier) and pick them up 10-15 minutes after the conclusion of practice. However, for the swimmer's protection children should not be dropped off before the arrival of a coach. Talk to the coach in advance about any circumstances that may cause your swimmer to be late to practice.

Meet Guidelines for Parents

- Please have your child on time for the warm-up session (usually about 15 minutes before the designated warm-up time.)
- Make sure your child has checked in for their events.
- Leave the coaching to the coach. Offer love and understanding regardless of your child's performance.
- Please enter your child's best times at the meets. Do not enter converted times or no time. Ask your child's coach for an "*estimated time*" if you do not have a time for the event. Keep a logbook of your child's best times for each event.
- Please try to attend the meets on the schedule. Notify the coach if your child is unable to attend a meet or going to meets not on the schedule.
- Talk to your coach if you have any questions about the meet schedule or meet entry times.

Demonstrating loyalty to the team and the team philosophy.

Communicating with the coach when questions or concerns arise in the manner outlined below:

Resolving Problems with the Coach

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents feel more comfortable discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but often results in new problems being created.

Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

- Keep in mind that the coach is committed to this sport and has your child's best interest in mind. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy a good rapport and a

constructive dialogue.

- Remember that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best of your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range in size from 5-20 members. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but the long-term benefits of the entire group compensate for an occasional short-term inconvenience.
- If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern ask the head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only who can resolve the problem.
- When contacting the coaches, please be considerate. The best way to speak with the coaches is to meet them after practice. Sending a note to the coach with your swimmer is also a good way to get information to them.