



Welcome to.....

**The Wonderful World of
SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING**

Welcome to the Club!

Synchronized swimming is a great way for your child to learn new skills, build self-confidence, meet new friends and increase health and energy levels in a safe and fun-filled environment.

In this handbook, we want to demystify the sport and get you in the loop as to how our club, The Ravensong Waterdancers, operates and what is expected from you as the parent(s), your athlete(s) and what you can expect in return.

Synchro Glossary

FINA - International governing board on aquatic disciplines, responsible for establishing unified rules www.fina.org

Canada Artistic Swimming (CAS) - governing board of Synchronized Swimming in Canada www.artisticswimming.ca

Synchro BC - governs, promotes, develops and delivers synchronized swimming programs and services for participants throughout BC www.synchro.bc.ca

Synchro - Shorthand name for synchronized swimming

Artistic Swimming - In 2017 FINA officially changed the name of the sport from Synchronized Swimming to Artistic Swimming. Our club chooses to continue referring to it as Synchronized Swimming

Star Program/Levels - a developmental skills program offered through CAS in which athletes are taught, and then tested on, fundamental skills, basic figures, sequence and routine components. Our club makes the effort to test annually, so that athletes (from all levels) may receive their lapel pins and certificates as they progress through the levels

Head Coach - oversees coaches and club as a whole from the role of Coach

Asst. Coach(es) - reports to Head Coach and oversees their own team(s)

Junior Coach(es) - able to coach Recreational teams; reports to Head Coach and oversees their own team(s)

Club Board, Executive and Coordinators - Group(s) of volunteer parents that oversee ALL aspects of the Ravensong Club. As a not-for-profit society, this is how the club is managed

RAC - Ravensong Aquatic Centre; located in Qualicum. Our club's home pool

NAC - Nanaimo Aquatic Centre; located in Nanaimo. Our club's secondary pool for practice

Dryland (training) - Any training that swimmers participate in on land (not in the water); can include cardio, strength, flexibility and land-drilling

Land drill - listening to the music and counting out the choreography on land, while using your arms to represent actions that will be taken in the water

Meet - term used for synchro competitions

Time Trials - held at the beginning and end of the season to track swimmer's abilities and growth. Different criteria for Recreation and Competitive; measures synchro specific skills in approximately 5 categories. Awards for most-improved (Rec and Comp separated) are handed out at the End-of-Year dinner following the watershow

Watershow - semi-annual (Dec and April) presentation put on by Ravensong Waterdancers. Open and free to the public; presented at RAC

Figure(s) - individual, isolated and controlled movements, that when put together form a routine. Also, performed one swimmer at a time at competitions in front of a panel of judges, that when added to routine scores comprise championship results for teams

Routine(s) - Fully choreographed sequence of figures and movements set to music; can be a team (minimum 4 swimmers to compete), duet (2 swimmers) or a solo (1 swimmer)

Social(s) - opportunities to have swimmers and/or their families come together outside of the pool setting. Can include (but not limited to) potlucks following Watershows, dinners out at competitions and end-of-year activities

Club History

Our club was formed in 1997 with approximately 30 athletes, to meet the needs of the Oceanside community. Since then we've expanded and now have athletes from the Oceanside area as well as Nanaimo.

The Ravensong Waterdancers are a competitive synchronized swimming club. Our experienced and award-winning coaches know how to deliver great results while keeping training sessions interesting, varied and fun for the athletes.

Club Structure

The Ravensong Waterdancers Synchro Club is a registered Society and comply with all rules and regulations within their operations. A Board of volunteers (parents of swimmers of any level in the club) are elected at the AGM (Annual General Meeting) that takes place before the new season starts. It is the members of the Club that are responsible for running the club. Coaches are employees of the club and we try to operate as close to a business model as possible.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the managing of the Ravensong Waterdancers and are always welcome to come forward with any ideas, thoughts or concerns they may have. We want all members and staff to know they are a valued member of the Club!

Program and Levels Offered

Star Program (all levels) - Ravensong Waterdancers prepare for, and have swimmers tested annually for the Star Program put out by Synchro Canada. The Star program is part of the Recreation and Competitive Provincial Stream levels. Generally, we have Recreation swimmers tested in the Spring and Competitive swimmers tested in the Fall (a sanctioned Tester is brought in, so your athlete must attend on the day set to participate).

Recreation - An introduction to synchro without the time commitment of a Provincial Level program. It provides athletes an opportunity to try out synchronized swimming; learning basic figures that enable athletes to swim in sync to music. The Rec level focuses on building the athlete's self confidence in the water by introducing them to the foundation elements of synchronized swimming and building up endurance in a fun, inclusive manner. Registration is ongoing throughout the year.

Limited Competitive - For athletes ready to build on their core skills and start learning the figures they'll need for the Provincial Competitive Stream. Limited Comp usually attend one meet a year (Provincial Qualifier in April). It is a great intermediate level before moving on to the full Competitive program. Limited Comp occasionally adds a Sunday practice at NAC for swimmers to experience a different pool, learn to dive off a bulk-head and have a pool that is deep for a full 25m.

For both **Recreation and Limited Competitive** - A minimum age of 7 and swimming ability of Swim Kids Level 5 (able to swim 1 length of the 25m pool) is required. Athletes may be in the process of completing Level 5 while registered in the Rec level. This program runs from October-April with breaks for Winter and Spring, same as the School District 69 schedule. Athletes are in the pool twice a week for an hour each and participate in both watershows (Dec and April).

Masters - For adults 19+ that want an introduction to a great sport or want to further their synchronized swimming skills and take it to the next level. Athletes practice a minimum of twice a week for 2 hours, with the option of Sunday practices for 1 hour. Typically this program includes a workout, figures and skill trainings, as well as a routine. The program runs from October to April with breaks for Winter and Spring, same as the school district 69 schedule.

Competitive (Provincial Stream) - The next level of synchro, our Competitive program, reflects the needs of the club in any given year. Athletes are trained in their respective figures age group level (as set out by Synchro BC), have a team routine to learn, as well as strength and flexibility skills to acquire.

Swimmers are registered as a team, minimum of four athletes, based on skill level and age, but compete in their respective age group for figures (first year as a Competitive swimmer, they allow athletes to compete one level down; onward, athletes compete in their respective age group).

The competitive season consists of two training meets, a Provincial Qualifier (Mabel Moran) and Provincials (Jean Peters). The program runs from late-September to mid-May, with breaks for winter and spring, same as the school district 69 schedule.

A high level of commitment is required for this level. Swimmers are expected to be at the pool two times a week for 2.5hours, with a third practice per week for another 1+ hour(s).

Solos and Duets - While in the Competitive level for a second year or more, solo or duets are available with the approval of the head coach (other factors include coach and pool time availability as well as parent approval). Practices are usually on Sundays for 1 hour (choreography only). This choice is an extra cost for monthly dues and fundraising quota.

Communication

It is vital that we have open communication at all times; we want to keep everyone as informed as possible. Email is the most efficient form of communication (as well as better for the environment!) for the club, so please ensure we always have your current email address. At the beginning of each season, by mid-October, we will send out a test email to ensure we have all addresses correct. Please advise us immediately if you feel you are not receiving emails.

Our email address ravensongsynchro@gmail.com can be used to reach any club members, Coaches and/or Executive, as well as Synchro BC/CAS (Please note that Synchro BC and CAS are inundated with emails - to help streamline communication, we ask that you go through the club to contact them, as we may have the answers without needing to email them) . If an athlete is not able to attend practice due to sickness, conflict, etc please email the club and the appropriate coach will be notified. It can also be used to clarify any questions, give feedback, or anything else you may need to contact the club for.

Our website is an excellent resource for useful information - www.ravensongwaterdancers.ca There you can find information including fee structure, program information, fundraisers, and upcoming events.

Our club also has a Facebook page that is used for upcoming events, meets, club meetings, fundraisers etc and we encourage all of you to 'like' us. Search [Ravensong Waterdancers](#) and find the Community Page.

You can follow us as well on Instagram, under the name [@ravensongwaterdancers](#)

We upload videos from some of our competitions, watershows and tutorials as well as subscribe to various, informational video channels on our YouTube channel, under [Ravensong Waterdancers](#).

Club Meetings

We hold monthly meetings, where everyone is welcome to attend! Agenda items can include Head Coach Report, Financial Report, Fundraising and Meet information. We encourage everyone to come out and join us, as this is the best way to stay connected with the club's happenings. Notice of upcoming meetings can be found on the website, along with all minutes from previous meetings (this allows those that want to stay in-the-know, but can't make meetings, to be able to).

Volunteer Opportunities

Without volunteers, the club would not exist! There are many opportunities within the club and we look forward to having your talents and skills help make the club a positive, effective and team-oriented network of families working with coaches. Some of these include:

- Executive Board member (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary)
- Coordinator position (Equipment, Fundraising, Social)
- Helping set-up/take down from Socials and Watershows

Do you have a skill or talent we could possibly put to use to help out the club? Just fire off an email and let us know!

Finances

It is imperative that our club remains in good financial standing throughout the season in order to continue operating. We collect post-dated cheques for monthly dues and two post-dated cheques (December 1st and April 1st) totalling the fundraising quota. As we are a not-for-profit, we are currently unable to accept other payment forms, including debit, credit or e-transfers.

Our Treasurer sends out invoices 2-3 times a year so that you may keep current with where your payments are at. If there are outstanding fees and/or equipment purchases that require payment, an invoice will be e-mailed. Annual receipts can be requested, if needed.

The fundraising quota for each level is outlined on our website. For families with two athletes in the club, the second athlete or the lesser amount, only pays half of the quota for their level (ie Competitive athlete is \$300/year, if they have a family member in Recreation - \$100/year - the Recreation swimmer would pay half of that, \$50) We try to provide a wide variety of fundraising opportunities for athletes to participate in to complete their fundraising commitment, including Purdy's chocolate bar sales and catalogue sales, QF Save-On and Thrifty Foods cards, Panago Pizza cards and an annual Swim-A-Thon.

Any fundraising that is in excess of the quota will be shared between the athlete and the Club 50/50. These excess funds will be applied to your account for any balance owing. If there is a credit in your account by the end of the year, funds can be carried forward to the following year or you can purchase equipment from the club.

Supplies

The Club has a supply of white and team (with logo) swim caps, and two different styles of nose clips available for purchase throughout the year. If you would like to purchase one, speak with a coach and they will provide it as well as get the item invoiced to your swimmer's account.

All swimmers should bring to practice:

Swimsuit

Goggles

Swim cap

Nose clip(s)

Towel and change of clothes

Water bottle (optional, but recommended)

Flip Flops (optional - for wear on deck)

Shower Supplies (optional - showers are available in facility)

Yoga mat (Competitive athletes)

Team Spirit and a Positive Attitude!

What else could there be?

Synchronized swimming is different than a lot of team sports, in the sense that usually there are 'spares' or 'alternate' athletes that can substitute in during play. This is not the case with Synchro and each individual athlete is counted on and trusted by their teammates to bring their best and support their team. Athletes and their families can do their best to arrive on time and make all practices they can.

We understand that there are many cold, flus etc that happen throughout the year. As long as the athlete does not have a fever, vomiting or is contagious, we encourage them to still participate to the best of their ability. (Sometimes they are able to remain on the pool deck and still train). Parents are welcome to discuss with the coach if they are unsure whether or not to send their athlete.

For planned family trips/vacations, there are times of the year that are better and those that are worse in relation to training throughout the year. We encourage you to discuss any travel with your coach as early in the year as possible, so that any effect it may have on the team can be considered and planned for by the coach.

While not at the pool, athletes can always work at home on:

- Breath control/cardio
- Flexibility
- Core strength
- Toe point
- Knee extension
- Smiling - while exhausted!
- Check the YouTube and Facebook pages for great tutorials and ideas!