

Bingo 101 - Under the "I:" Intense!

We have several new families this season - welcome to the club and to swimming! Here's a quick Bingo 101 to explain exactly what this whole bingo thing is about and how it works.

I'm a busy person. Give me a quick outline.

We fundraise to help cover the cost of running the club. Our main fundraiser is bingo, so we need swim parents (that's you) to help by working at bingo sessions.

Actually, I have more questions. People still play bingo?

Indeed they do. Bingo is an extremely important part of our fundraising. Under provincial gaming laws, bingo sessions must involve a charitable organization. There is only one bingo hall in the area and competition among area clubs for a piece of the pie is fierce. Over the last few years, we've managed to move up the seniority list, gaining more bingo dates to the point where we now work two or three per month. For each session we work, we get a portion of the proceeds, so more bingo sessions means more money for the club. Overall, our bingo work earns several thousand dollars each year and every dollar we collect through fundraising is a dollar we don't have to charge in fees.

So what do I do?

Our duties revolve around selling bingo cards and other games to patrons of the bingo hall. Basically, taking cash, giving change and selling stuff, plus dealing with the hall staff as play begins. There's some very basic math, but it isn't hard at all. And we help with the cleanup at the end of the session. Bingo hall staff take care of the rest.

It's all pretty easy. Really. Absolutely nothing to be nervous about. The work is straightforward and it's a great way to meet other parents.

How long does it take?

The time commitment is about four hours for each bingo session. Most of our sessions are late night, meaning 9 PM to 1 AM, but we do usually get a few earlier ones.

Do I have to do this?

It's mandatory for each family to work at one bingo session per swim season (September to August). Depending on availability (families needing to work their first session get priority) and the need for volunteers, families can also work additional bingo dates in exchange for \$50 credits that can be applied to fees for either the current or next swim season, depending on the date.

This is really important and we need everyone to do their part. Please note that if you don't work a bingo during a swim season, a fine will be charged to your account.

When does this all happen?

There are about 25-30 bingo sessions per year, year-round. We get two bingo licences per year (January to June, and July to December).

How do I sign up?

When we get our new licence, there will be an email asking for volunteers. You can sign up and see all of the dates on the club's Team Unify site at <https://www.teamunify.com/TabGeneric.jsp?tabid=85369&team=canwdsc>. You can also send an email to bingo@whitbydolphins.com. And we send emails when we need to fill spaces. So lots of email.

Where do we go?

The Red Barn Bingo hall is located at 172 Wayne Court in Oshawa. It's off Somerville St., just south of Taunton Rd. Their website is at <http://www.redbarnbingo.ca/homepage.cfm>.

Does my whole family go?

Nope. We just need one person per family, unless discussed otherwise. Three families volunteer for each session, so that, plus the bingo coordinator, means the club has four people there. Four is the requirement from the bingo hall. **Important note** – this is a commitment for parents, not swimmers. You need to be an adult, or at least an older teen, to work a bingo.

Who runs everything?

The bingo coordinators are Ken Derby, Dean Nickerson and Stephen Sachs. One of us will be working with you at each session. We also arrange for volunteers, file the necessary reports with the City of Oshawa and apply for licences.

What about food and drink? And how do I dress?

Feel free to bring snacks and a drink. There is a snack bar on the premises. Dress is casual or pretty much whatever you want.

What if I've volunteered for a date and something comes up?

Please do your best to honour your commitments. However, we realize life happens. If something comes up, please let me know ASAP so we can make arrangements for a replacement. You can reach me at bingo@whitbydolphins.com.

This is a volunteer thing. Does that mean that my high school kid can use it as part of their high school volunteer requirement?

We can definitely talk about that.

I have more questions!

We're happy to answer them. Drop us a line at bingo@whitbydolphins.com. Or feel free to corner any of us at the pool or wherever.