**Swim Team Parents FAQ**

 The Deerbrook Bluefish offer competitive swimming for ages 5 to 18 with individual events in four strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly), individual medley (all four strokes in one event), medley relay, and freestyle relay. There are five age groups: 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18.

 We also offer a Developmental Team for younger swimmers who are learning the basics of the strokes.

 Besides offering swimmers the opportunity to develop their skills in competition, the Deerbrook Bluefish swim team provides a great way for kids to make friends! The swim team hosts several social events throughout the summer in addition to the other social events hosted by the club. Be sure to check out the calendar and our Swim Team Handbook for more information!

**General Swim Team Questions**

**1. What is the swim team and why would I want my child to participate?**

It's fun. It's great exercise. It builds confidence. It's a great way for your child to meet other kids. It's a great way for you to meet other parents.

**2. Who can answer my questions about the swim team?**

The Deerbrook Booster Club Chairpersons coordinate the swim team efforts. They can answer most of your questions or direct you to a person who can. Their email is dbbc26@gmail.com.

**3. What strokes do the swimmers use in competition?**

Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

**4. I just want my child to learn how to swim better. Do they have to swim in competition?**

You should discuss this with the coach.

**5. I see that there are different age groups for the swimmers. How does that work?**

The age groups are 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18. Every other year your child will have an "up" year when they are the oldest in their age group and a "down" year when they are the youngest in their age group.

**6. Does Deerbrook have an Olympic size pool?**

No. The length of Deerbrook's pool is 25 meters. An Olympic size pool is 50 meters.

**7. What is Tri-County?**

The Tri-County Swimming Association is an organization representing 36 summer swim clubs in three counties (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester.) You can visit the website at [www.tricountyswimming.org](http://www.tricountyswimming.org/) for more information.

Tri-County is also used a shorthand for the "Tri-County Championship Meet" that is held at the end of the summer swim season. To attend Tri-County a swimmer must qualify by swimming faster than a set time in the particular event. The times required to qualify for each age group and stroke are listed on the swim team bulletin board and at the Tri-County website.

**Swim Team Practices**

**8. How often and when is practice?**

The practice schedule is available from the Swim Team page.

**9. What happens if we have a conflict and my child is not able to attend practice?**

Report any absences to the coach. You can submit an absence through the swim team website.

**10. Does my child need to wear the team swim suit during practice? During a meet? What brand and where do I buy it?**

Not during practice. In fact, to reduce wear-and-tear the swim team suit should only be worn during meets. Our swim team suit changes every two years. The swim team page has information on the suit for this season. You can purchase the team suit at Dansiezen and Quigley.

**11. My child attends a summer day camp. Can s/he still participate?**

There are special camper practices. You can check the swim team page and calendar for more information on the practice times and also be sure to talk with the coach about your schedule.

**Swim Meets**

**12. What is a dual meet and what other kinds of meets are there?**

A dual meet is held between two swim teams. One swim club is the host team and the other is the visiting team. Deerbrook participates in five dual "A" meets and four dual "B" meets. The schedule is posted on the calendar on the team website.

There are two main championship meets that Deerbrook participates in: Burlington County (9 teams) and the Tri-County Championship Meet (36 teams). Each is discussed more below.

There may be additional meets such as mini-meets offered by other clubs and advertised at [www.tricountyswimming.org](http://www.tricountyswimming.org/).

**13. What is an "A" meet and what is a "B" meet?**

"A" meets are competitive and the results determine what division Deerbrook will swim in next year. At the end of the swim season the team with the best record moves up a division and the team with the worst record moves down a division.

"B" meets are not as competitive and the results have no effect on Deerbrook's standing in the division. This does not mean that the kids swimming in B meets are any less talented and often you will see swimmers from the A meet swimming strokes that they are not able to swim in an A meet. The B meets are also limited to 14 and under swimmers.

"A" meets are held on Saturday mornings and include all age groups. "B" meets are held on Wednesday evening and are generally only for swimmers ages 14 and under. "B" meets have fewer events and tend to be less structured (and more chaotic) than "A" meets.

**14. Can a child swim in both A and B meets?**

Yes, however if a swimmer has qualified for the Tri-County Championship Meet in a particular stroke they can't swim that stroke in a B meet and if they qualify for Tri-County Championships in more than one event is not allowed to swim in B meets.

**15. How do we know which meet my child will swim in?**

The coach will tell you what event(s) your child will be swimming in the day before the meet. The "meet sheet" is posted the day before the meet.

**16. How many meets will my child participate in?**

It depends on a variety of factors including your child's swimming ability, the availability of other children within the age group, and coaching strategy.

The summer competitive swim season is relatively short (five weeks) with only five dual meets. If a swimmer qualifies or is selected to the championship team to compete in Burlington County and/or Tri-County the season is seven weeks.

**17. When are the meets?**

"A" meets are Saturday morning. The coach will tell you when to have your child at the meet for warmups.

"B" meets are on Wednesday evening. Again, the coach will tell you when to have your child at the meet for warmups.

A schedule of the meets can be found from the swim team website.

**18. How long does a meet last?**

"B" meets are usually 2 to 2.5 hours.

"A" meets are usually 2.5 to 3 hours long.

**19. What teams will we swim against?**

It depends on the division. The teams in each division are listed at the Tri-County website: [www.tricountyswimming.org](http://www.tricountyswimming.org/).

A schedule of the meets can also be found on the swim team website and calendar.

**20. Where can I find directions to the swim club we are visiting?**

You can find directions to all the clubs at the Tri-County website (www.tricountyswimming.org). For away ‘A’ meets the team will meet at Deerbrook and drive in a caravan to the opponent's swim club.

**21. What can I do to help prepare my child for a meet?**

Have your swimmer eat a healthy diet, get plenty of sleep, bring a water bottle to the meet, and have them to the meet on time. Advise them to listen to the coach and to have fun! Cheer them on too!

**22. What are the events in a meet?**

The events in a "B" vary from an “A” meet somewhat; however, there are 66 events in an "A" meet.

**23. What is a "heat"?**

In a “B” meet and in championship meets an event may be divided into multiple "heats." An “A” meet will only have one heat in each event with 2 to 6 swimmers depending on the number of swimmers and the size of the pool. However, in order to be able to have everyone swim in a “B” meet, some events will have multiple heats of swimmers all swimming the same event. The championship meets with multiple teams often have multiple heats of each event to accommodate the large number of swimmers.

**24. What is a relay? And what stroke(s) do the swimmers use?**

Relays consist of four "legs" with a different child swimming each leg. The distance varies with the age group from 100 meters (four lengths of the pool) for the younger age groups to 200 meters for the older age groups. You can review the full list of events to get a feel for where the relays occur in the meet.

There are two types of relays: medley and freestyle. The medley relay has four different legs: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle. The freestyle relay has four legs of freestyle.

**25. How is it determined what swimmers will be on a relay?**

The coach makes this decision. There are a variety of factors involved.

**26. How is the winner of an “A” meet determined?**

The fastest swimmers in each event earn points for their team using the following scale:

Individual events: 1st = 5 points, 2nd = 3 points, 3rd = 1 point

Relay events: 1st = 7 points, 2nd = 0 points

**27. What does DQ mean?**

Disqualification - this can happen for a variety of reasons including starting early (false start), leaving the diving block early in a relay, performing an illegal stroke, performing an illegal turn, not touching the wall with two hands during a breaststroke turn, etc.

**28. Are kids DQed a lot?**

No. The younger swimmers, especially the 8 & under age group tend to have more problems early in the season, but you'll see a DQ from time to time in every age group.

If your child is disqualified try not to get upset about it. Your swimmer will be unhappy enough about it without having your emotions adding to the situation. If you think there was an error made, then discuss it calmly with the coach. Do NOT discuss it with the officials. Let the coach do that if it is appropriate.

**29. What does it mean when my child is "swimming up"?**

The coach may determine that the team (and perhaps the swimmer) can best be served by having your child swim in an older age bracket.

**30. Does my child have to participate in every meet? What happens if my child has a conflict for a meet?**

Let the coach know in writing as soon as possible if your swimmer will not be able to attend a meet.

**31. How do swimmers earn ribbons and medals at meets?**

In dual "A" meets, ribbons are given for the first four places in individual events and first place in the relay events. In "B" meets, ribbons are given to all participants.

The policies vary with championship meets and are usually posted at the websites associated with the championship meet.

**32. What is Burlington County Championships? When and where is it? Will my child swim in it?**

Burlington County Championships is the championship meet with the 9 Burlington County swim clubs. The hosting of the meet is rotated between the clubs so it varies with each season.

Swimmers are chosen by the coaches for this meet. Swimmers and parents will find out who is swimming the Sunday after the last “A” meet.

**33. What is Tri-County? When and where is it?**

The Tri-County Championship meet (36 teams) is held in early August. The [Tri-County Web Site](http://www.tricountyswimming.org/) will have the details. It's an amazing event and you should encourage your swimmer to go if they qualify.

Swimmers may participate in at most two individual events and two relays.

**34. How are the results of the meet posted?**

The team results will be announced at the end of the meet.

**35. How can I best help the team?**

Support your child by bringing them to practice, preparing them for the meet and cheering for them and the team at the meets.

Volunteer to help out at a swim meet or with other swim team duties. It's an all volunteer effort and there is always something more that can be done.

Consider becoming a stroke & turn judge, starter or referee. The officiating is all volunteer and it always helps to have more people trained to step in when others have scheduling conflicts for a meet. You may also enjoy the meet more when you know the rules well.

It takes approximately 24 volunteers just to run a meet:

1 Starter
1 Referee
2 Stroke & Turn Officials
1 Place Judge
1 Head Timer
9 Timers
2 Stagers
3 Score Keepers/Records
2 Runners
1 Announcer
2 Ribbon writers

Plus we will need volunteers to work the bake table and Bluefish Grill. We always need people to bake/bring desserts for pasta night & other team events. We also need volunteers to help run some of the team's social events.

**Swim Meet Officials**

**36. How is a meet officiated and who are the officials?**

A swim meet will have a referee who runs the meet, a starter who announces the event and starts the swimmers, multiple stroke and turn judges, a head timer and multiple timers for each lane. You'll get the hang of the flow of events at an "A" meet very quickly. The "B" meets are less formal and tend to be more chaotic, but just like the "A" meets they're fun!

**37. I see some parents timing the events. Can I do that too?**

Sure. At "A" meets there are three timers required on each lane. At "B" meets there are usually only two timers and one is all that is required since the times are unofficial.

If you are a timer make sure you use the strobe light instead of the horn for starting your stopwatch. This is why you may see timers craning their necks around the swimmers or other timers to make sure they can see the strobe light.

Although each lane has three timers, there will be two timers from the opposing team timing your swimmer. Likewise we will have two of three timers doing the timing for the opposing team's lanes.

**38. Why do the timers have to go to the other end of the pool for some events?**

The 8 & unders and 9-10 groups have some 25 meter events. They dive off the blocks (or start from the wall for backstroke) and swim one length of the pool. The timers have to see them touch the wall so they are located at the opposite end of the pool from the starting blocks.

By the way, it is legal to start from the side of the pool instead of a starting block. You may see this with some of the younger swimmers who are not comfortable diving yet.

The 11-12 year-olds and older have all 50 or 100 meter events. They start and end on the same edge of the pool by the starting blocks.

**39. Being an official looks like fun and/or I want to help the team by being an official. How do I find out more?**

There are free clinics to teach you the rules at GCIT at the beginning of the summer. Check with our Tri-County representative, Neil Fleisher, for more information.

**40. I'm sure that kid just did an illegal turn on his backstroke, but he wasn't called for it. Who do I complain to?**

It's not really a parent's place to find fault with the officiating. If you feel strongly that there is a problem with the officiating then you should talk with one of the swim team representatives or the coach. They can best decide how to proceed, but the officiating is really under the direction of the hosting club's referee.

**41. That's a strange looking freestyle stroke. Is that legal?**

Except for an exception or two, Tri-County uses USA Swimming rules. The [USA Swimming web site](http://www.usaswimming.org/) has the rules.

**42. I noticed on the Tri-County web site that there is an error in the time that my child swam in a recent meet. How do I get that corrected?**

Talk to a booster chairperson. They will know best how to get the situation corrected.

**43. It looks like there is a lot to do to run a swim meet. Can I help?**

Yes! See a booster chairperson for ideas.

**Coaches, Parents, Kids**

**44. Who are the coaches?**

Check out the Coaches page for more information.

**45. How can I best help the coach help my child?**

Bring them to practices regularly, prepared and on time. Be supportive and let them enjoy the sport. Let the coach do the coaching.

**46. How do I let a coach know when we can't attend practice? or be at a meet?**

Please let the coach know in writing as soon as possible. It's necessary to put it in writing since the coaches are trying to coordinate over 100 swimmers on the team and a verbal notice will probably be forgotten. You can submit your absence through our website.

**47. I can't be at the swim meets. Can I help in other ways?**

Yes! See a booster club chairperson for ideas.

**Winter Swimming**

**48. Do meets work the same in the winter as they do in the summer?**

No, there are significant differences. There are more meets available during the winter and there are various regional and even national meets. The distances are somewhat longer usually although "short course yard" (SCY) (25 yard) pools are more common. You may see "short course meter" (SCM) (25 meter) and even "long course" (LC = 50 meter) events.

 **49. What options are available if my child wants to continue swimming in the winter?**

There are several options in the area. See below for more information.

**Local winter swimming programs:**

* [Burlington County YMCA Hurricanes](http://www.ymcahurricanes.com/)
* [Jersey Wahoos](http://www.jerseywahoos.org/)
* [SJAC South Jersey Aquatics Club](http://www.sjaquatics.com/)
* Medford Fitness WAVE
* PRSC

**Some regional and national sites of interest:**

* [USA Swimming](http://www.usaswimming.org/)
* [Mid-Atlantic Swimming](http://www.maswim.org/)
* [YMCA Swimming & Diving](http://www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org/)